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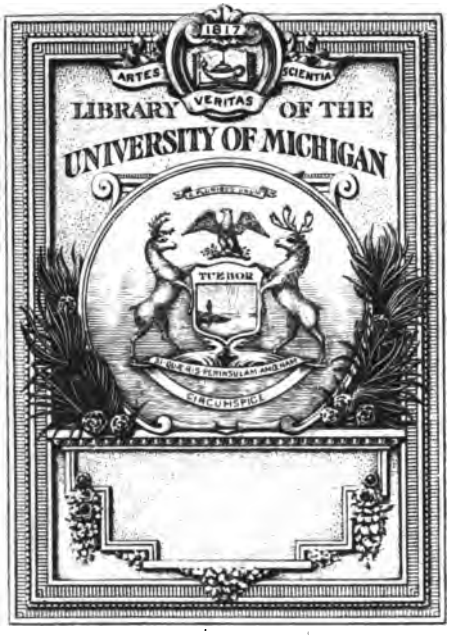
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AMERICAN LITERATURE

BY

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PREFACE

The method of teaching literature exclusively through a historical text-book has for many years been discredited. The substitution, however, of the study of a few selected "masterpieces" has also proved unsatisfactory, both because it leaves literature unrelated to history, and because it leaves the student without any sense of relations and proportion in literature itself. The remedy is sought in a compromise. None will attempt to teach literature to-day without requiring liberal reading in the works of important writers; but at the same time this reading will be regulated and the acquired knowledge set in order by the use of a critical history.

Careful organization, therefore, should characterize every such history. There should be adequate recognition both of the various phases of literature and of individual writers. The selection of a few names, however truly representative, will not answer; and no writer may be presented in isolation from the rest. Doubtless, for the purpose of elementary study, in which memory plays so great a part, some sharpness of outline is needed, and this calls for a partial detachment of authors. But relations must still be attended to, and proportion observed. The lesser men may be crowded down, but they should not be thrown out; they are needed to give the right perspective—to show that literature is not an affair of some half a dozen overtopping names, but that it is a wide activity, without definable metes and bounds. At the same time the wise teacher will avoid burdening his pupils' memories with the more colorless names and dates, which are to be seen rather than looked at,

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like the minor features of a landscape that lie outside the focus of the eye.

In the matter of critical estimates the writer of a text-book finds himself in a position of uncomfortable responsibility. Immature students, unused to judgment, and unable to test the opinions delivered to them, often take those opinions without question, like so much gospel. At first thought, the only safe course would seem to lie in rigidly following "current estimates." But it should be possible to preserve independence of judgment without giving way to personal vagary, and at the worst a little heresy may serve to stimulate the student's critical faculty. After all, only time can determine where the heresy lies. Current criticism, for instance, tends perceptibly to depreciate our native literature. Possibly one who, like the writer of this book, has an honest admiration for our less academic writers, and ventures to set himself against this attitude, may find himself justified in the end.

Of course, the writer of a text-book in this field owes much to certain standard critical works. For the early period the books of Professor Tyler, unhappily now concluded, are indispensable. For the later period Mr. Stedman's *Poets of America* is a natural guide, though Mr. Stedman has such an easy way of winning assent that one who values his own independence will use him charily. Professor Richardson's *American Literature* is valuable for the whole field. Professor Wendell's *Literary History of America* has come too late to be of service to the present work, but it is included among the books of reference. All are commended to the student with the simple advice to make the usual allowance for personal and local influences. Mr. Stedman, for instance, though he never fails to do justice to the Cambridge men, is disposed to make more of the New York poets—Bayard Taylor and others—than their merit seems to warrant; while on the other

hand Professor Wendell of Harvard, though certainly never prejudiced in praise of New England genius, treats with scant courtesy the Muses of the Crotonian fount.

The list of late writers included in the appendix of this book is to be regarded chiefly as a directory. Upon many of these writers it is altogether too early to pass judgment, and many of the names have been admitted principally for the reason that they are likely to be sought for, or to make a more complete exhibition of the tendencies of a time or a locality. The somewhat full references and suggestions for study are intended for aids in the class room.

Thanks are due to Mr. Lindsay T. Damon, of the University of Chicago, for most helpful criticism both upon organization and upon details. Acknowledgment is also due to Messrs. D. Appleton and Co., of New York, the publishers of Bryant's works, and to Mr. David McKay, of Philadelphia, the publisher of Brown's and Whitman's works, for permission to make extracts from books of which they hold the exclusive copyright.

Stanford University, Cal. A. G. N.
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INTRODUCTION

The English colonies on the western Atlantic seaboard, and their political successors, the United States of America, have won, by many and varied achievements, a conspicuous place in the history of civilization. But no form of art stands high among those achievements, and American literature cannot yet take rank with the great literatures of the world. It could scarcely be otherwise. Before the arts can flourish, there must be a certain security of social and political life. This security can come only after its foundations have been laid in the struggle for existence itself, in the successful providing of food, clothing, and shelter. The occupants of the New World have been busy bringing the wilderness under cultivation, experimenting with a bewildering variety of soil and climate, and exploring the countless sources of material wealth. Above all, a population nominally English, but really of diverse nationalities, has been learning the hard lesson of self-government under novel and trying conditions. There has been little leisure to devote to art.

It is further to be considered that the brief life of the nation, as such, has fallen in an age of remarkable scientific and material advance. What other centuries were content to refer to vaguely as "wonders of nature" have in the nineteenth century been searchingly investigated, to the opening up of new and apparently boundless fields of knowledge. The impulse once given, it is not surprising that men should neglect the more abstruse creations of their brains for the absorbing study

of the creations around them and the utilization of their discoveries in the practical concerns of life. Energies that in another age would have gone to the making of a statue or a poem have been steadily diverted to science and the mechanic arts. And a nation like our own, young and eager, with all the means for scientific investigation and material progress and none of the stimulus of ancient art, would of all nations feel this impulse most keenly.

The effects upon our literature are evident. During only one of the three centuries since the permanent occupation of America by the English people has any literature worthy of the name been produced. Few of our writers have been writers primarily, and few of them have left any such volume of work as we are accustomed to associate with the names of great European authors. In quality, too, our literature is often like a thin wine, without body. Many things are lacking to it. A transplanted people, we are not as a race that is born to the inheritance of its land and bound together by long community of interests and of purpose. We have no barbarous or legendary past to enrich our chronicles and fire our imaginations. Chivalry and feudalism have no direct part in us. We have no national deities or patron saints; no ancient and mystic priesthood; no fairies, no knights, no courtiers, no kings. We have not even a distinct national name about which traditions might gather and which, like *Merrie England* or *la belle France*, would serve to conjure with in the realm of art. Thus our literature quite lacks the peculiar flavor sometimes known as *race*. It lacks, too, the atmosphere of aristocracy, and, in a sense, the atmosphere of religion.* Worst of all, perhaps, it lacks the feeling for artistic repose, the sense for proportion and beauty; for the strenuous moral and intellectual life of our ancestors has left us a heritage aesthetically barren.

* Charles Johnston, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, July, 1899.

Still, there are compensations. A new world is at least new, and its writers may find novel themes and fresh inspiration just over their thresholds. Our colonial and national history has not been uneventful. There have been religious crusades, financial and industrial panics, and wars both foreign and domestic. The very social chaos which paralyzes art, the conflict and tumult of diverse races struggling towards unity, is, to one who can detach himself and observe, a highly dramatic spectacle. Besides, the world of nature does not materially change. In a new country, indeed, the lure of outdoor life is peculiarly strong. And in variety of natural features, in charm of landscape, in diversity of seasons, in wealth of flora and fauna, the old world has no advantage over the new. Still less does human nature change, and wherever two men find room to stand together, the primal passions will assert themselves and the poet find his song. It was only a question of time when there should be an American literature, and the time was not unduly long in coming.

Now, indeed, some portion of our literature is safely enshrined as classic, and it is possible for us to look back upon a fairly definite and complete epoch. The literary spirit, the instinct to record the thoughts, feelings, and observations of men, has its fluctuations. At times it is strong and fertile, at other times weak, at still others barren. But at no time in our history has the literary spirit been absolutely barren, and through one period it was strong enough to leave a record at once great and worthy—great in insight and originality, and of adequate art. Now that that period seems to be passed and that its leaders are gone with it, the history of American literature may be written without fear or apology.

Manifestly there can be no elaborate time-division of a literature that has had but one era of high accomplishment. The simple facts stand out clearly: first, that down to the very beginning of the nineteenth century scarcely a book was

published in America that is read to-day for its imaginative or artistic qualities; second, that at the beginning of the nineteenth century letters were first recognized in America as a profession, and that though the work of the best writers was still, for several decades, either slender or crude, the literature of the nation grew steadily in breadth and quality until, toward the middle of the century, we had in the East a group of writers who were recognized as great both at home and abroad, and whose work we still rank clearly above all that has been produced since; and third, that in the last few decades, or since our civil war, the literary impulse has betrayed itself in every corner of our land, sending forth a wealth of literature of which some account must be taken, but upon which judgment cannot yet be final. These three large and well defined periods may be indicated thus:

I. The Beginnings, extending from the founding of the colony at Jamestown in 1607 down to about 1800.

II. The Creative Impulse, extending from the first decade of the nineteenth century to the civil war.

III. The Period of Later Activity, extending from the civil war to the present time.

It will be well, at this point, to note also some geographical distinctions. Before the wide diffusion of our literature with the growth of our territory and population, it flourished only along the Atlantic seaboard. That region may be conveniently divided into three sections: the North, or Massachusetts Bay region—New England—with a literary capital at Boston; the South, or the region about the James River and Chesapeake Bay, with literary capitals (in the later time) at Richmond, Baltimore, and Washington; and the somewhat vaguely defined intermediate region of the Hudson and Delaware Rivers, with capitals at New York and Philadelphia. We shall find first one and then another of these sections the centre of the highest literary activity.

PART I

BEGINNINGS

FROM THE SETTLEMENT OF VIRGINIA IN 1607 TO THE END OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER I

THE COLONIAL PERIOD.—CAVALIER, PURITAN, AND QUAKER

1607—1765

Our forefathers did not find it easy to cultivate simultaneously the soil and the Muses. Their situation, like that of most colonists, was an unnatural one. There was a lack of harmony between themselves and their surroundings which only generations of slow adjustment could remedy. On the one hand they were far too civilized to develop a folk-literature of song and legend, while on the other hand their environment was too primitive to foster that literature of culture which the educated element among them was fitted to enjoy. In England the era immediately before and after the colonization of America was eminently an era of court literature. Sir Philip Sidney, courtier, warrior, romancer, and poet, was the ideal of the early Elizabethans. Spenser never ceased to mourn his half-enforced banishment to the wilds of Ireland. The dramatists flocked to London. Bacon rose to be lord chancellor and a peer. Milton, half a century later, was secretary to the Commonwealth. Dryden was poet laureate. Addison was secretary of state. Pope was a London "wit," who throve, like his predecessors, under a system of liberal patronage. It was too much to expect that the men who crossed the sea and changed their sky should change also their nature and find in their strange surroundings inspiration to some new kind of song.

Of course, an original genius might have arisen here.

But original geniuses are rare, and the actual numbers of the new inhabitants were so small that the law of chance was against such an event. Besides, men or families with a strong bias toward literature and art were not likely to cast in their lot with bands of adventurers. The charms of nature were little felt or understood. The modern romantic spirit was not yet rife, and poets did not fly to the wilderness to assuage their woes or minister to their love of the picturesque. Not for more than a century was a Chateaubriand to visit our shores, penetrate the "forest primeval," and stand in rapt admiration on the banks of the Mississippi while the trunks of fallen oaks and pines floated past him between the islands of yellow water-lilies. Moreover, those of Puritan faith, coming here for freedom to worship God after their own manner, were almost wholly bound up in that worship. The emotional side of their nature, finding the satisfaction of its needs in their religion, led them neither to the solace of the fields and the sky nor to the delights of art. Of art, indeed, they were suspicious, as something concerning itself more with form than with spirit, a worship, as it were, of graven images, and intimately connected with Rome and Romanism, the objects of their most deadly hatred.

Yet almost from the first day of the landing of the colonists, at Jamestown in 1607 and at Plymouth in 1620, writing went on; for many of the colonists were, after the manner of their time, educated people, and the leaders at least were lettered men. The first books, of course, remained long in manuscript or were sent to England for publication. By 1639, however, a printing-press was imported and set up at Cambridge. On it were printed, first a sheet or pamphlet, *The Freeman's Oath*, and second, *Pierce's Almanack*. The *Bay Psalm Book*, 1640, was the first printed book. In 1636 a college (now Harvard University) was founded and two years later named after the man who endowed it with one-half

of his estate and a library of three hundred volumes. By the middle of the century public instruction was compulsory in most of the colonies. A translation of the Bible into the Algonkin tongue, made by John Eliot, the "apostle to the Indians," was published in 1661–1663, the first Bible printed in British America. Just when the quaint little *New England Primer* began its long career of usefulness is not known; there is a notice of a second impression of it in an almanac of 1691.* In 1704 the *Boston News-Letter* marked the advent of American journalism, the power which has grown to such gigantic proportions.

Such were a few of the significant events during the first century of literary industry in America, an industry that for full another century was to continue producing books which, in Charles Lamb's sense, are no books, literature that is not literature. Our review of this product may not be extended or searching; the books themselves are for the most part not easily accessible, sufficient proof that they are not live books. The entire portion of the colonial literary product that either aimed at or in any measure deserved permanence falls into a simple classification under three heads—history, poetry, and theology.

HISTORY

The history comprises all the prose of a narrative or descriptive nature. It was but natural that some of the colonists should write down a record of their doings from day to day, in the form either of diaries or of reports to the promoters of the colonies in the mother country. Sometimes these records became

Captain John Smith, 1579–1632.

*Extract from "*An Alphabet of Lessons for Youth*":*

"HOLINESS becomes God's house forever.

"IT is good for me to draw near unto God.

"KEEP thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

"LIARS shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone."

more ambitious and took on the organized form and proportions of a professed history. Captain John Smith, the leading spirit of the Jamestown colony, whose affections seem to have been evenly divided between his sword and his pen, has the honor of inscribing his plain name first on the roll of the English writers of this new land. In 1608 he sent back to England his *True Relation* of occurrences in Virginia, and sixteen years later, while he was living in England, he published his *General History of Virginia*, a more comprehensive account of those matters relating to the New World with which he was familiar.

It must be remembered, however, that Smith was in no rightful sense an American, but an Englishman, a fair type of the courtly, worldly royalists who came to be known a little later in English history and in Virginian colonization as "cavaliers." He had travelled eastward as well as westward, and he wrote much that had nothing to do with America. He spent less than three years, all told, in this country. His name and his works belong to England, where, of course, their little lustre was even in his own day quite eclipsed. Yet we are not ashamed to lay part claim to those two works, the first literary fruits of the inspiration of the wilderness. They may not be accurate as history, but they are a voice out of momentous days and deeds. For Smith put into his work no slight measure of the heroic, the Homeric quality, which gives vitality to work in any age. Even when he was not true to facts he could not help being true to himself, and he unconsciously portrays himself with all his virtues and vices, his energy, his bluntness, his bravado, and his egotism. There is no reason, however, to suppose, as has often been charged, that he was deliberately untruthful. The pretty story of Pocahontas, for example, was for awhile discredited. But there is more reason to believe the story than to doubt it. We must simply remember the romantic spirit of the man and

read him by that light. When we hear his tales of the gigantic Susquehannocks whose language "sounded from them as a voice in a vault" and whose calves were "three-quarters of a yard about," we recognize the writer for a man of imagination and a worthy member of the literary guild. He was bound to magnify a little his deeds, and through them the deeds of his patrons, the "most noble Lords and worthy Gentlemen" of King James's court; and though he chose to call his book a history and not a romance, he was not the man to hang upon any subtle distinction between the words *history* and *story*. He tells his story as an "honest Souldier" should, with due regard to the entertainment of his readers. He can be practical, too, as well as romantic. He studies the winds and the clouds in their relation to seasons and harvests. He counts the ears on a stalk of corn and the grains on an ear. He describes in one place, with minutest detail, the methods of cooking maize, but protests that burnt and powdered corn-cob "never tasted well in bread nor broth." On this last point, indeed, none will question his veracity.

Of other writers in the South, both in Smith's time and later, honest chroniclers enough, the names belong to history and not to literature. An exception might be made in the case of one William Strachey, who in his passage to Virginia in the fleet of Sir George Somers and Sir Thomas Gates was wrecked on the Bermuda Islands. His *True Reportory of the Wrack*, probably written in Virginia in 1610 and published in England in 1612, is a really graphic and imaginative account, and criticism has almost certainly determined that from it, or from Strachey himself, Shakespeare drew some of the pictures and phrases used in the description of Prospero's island in *The Tempest*. So slender is the link which connects American letters with the highest of England's names. But the South, always conservative and always careless about education,

William Strachey.

has never been prolific of writers, and with this short notice of John Smith and William Strachey we take a long leave of that region.

Samuel Sewall, 1652-1730.

The historical writers of colonial New England, from Governor William Bradford in the seventeenth century to Thomas Prince in the eighteenth, were likewise of the plodding, sedate chronicler type. One rather more than the rest, however, writing with the humblest intentions, succeeded in touching to a little life the record of his times. This was Chief Justice Samuel Sewall, of Massachusetts, the publication of whose diary only a few years since has given him a new interest in our eyes. He is memorable for several things. He was a judge in the witchcraft trials of 1692, passing sentence for which he afterward made a public confession of repentance. He published perhaps the first American tract against slavery. And of one of his prophecies Whittier has made a touching poem, praying that

> "Green forever the memory be
> Of the Judge of the old Theocracy."

But it is the diary, faithfully kept through a long lifetime, that forces itself most upon our attention, and while we can not take a profound interest in its minute, gossipy, and unimaginative record—in the fact that the Judge periodically had his hair cut, or that his pussy-cat died in her thirteenth year—the book makes yet its appeal to our human sympathies and will be read by many who could not be persuaded to look into the more scholarly works of Bradford and Prince.

POETRY

'Bay Psalm Book.'

Poetry in early New England throve even less than narrative and descriptive prose. Indeed, to call any of the verse of that time poetry, argues a lack of humor. The *Bay Psalm Book*, for instance, was a

heroic attempt, conspired in by three worthy divines, to set the Psalms to metre and, by great good fortune, rhyme. The verses were intended to be sung to the five or ten tunes which the churches possessed. Here is one of the more successful stanzas :

"Yee gates lift-up your heads
and doors everlasting,
doe yee lift-up: & there into
shall come the glorious-King."

Few will succeed in reading even this stanza smoothly at the first attempt. Such utter uncouthness of form, as far removed from Miltonic harmonies as "from the centre thrice to the utmost pole," shows how small a part even the mere reading of poetry can have played in the culture of the New World Puritans.

Nevertheless, the Puritans raised up poets according to their tastes and abilities. The poems of one of these, Mistress Anne Bradstreet, were introduced to the British and American public of 1650 under this alluring title, devised doubtless by her London printer: *The Tenth Muse lately sprung up in America; or, Several Poems, compiled with great variety of wit and learning, full of delight.* Whatever delight may lie concealed in the rather voluminous verses,—*The Four Monarchies*, *The Four Elements*, *Contemplations* (published later), and other such physical and metaphysical speculations, —is not worth seeking for to-day. Some genuine terror, however, may still be extracted from the verses of one of Mrs. Bradstreet's contemporaries, Michael Wigglesworth, who in his *Day of Doom* (1662) set to a lilting, double-rhymed, Yankee Doodle sort of measure his conception of a Calvinistic Judgment, infant damnation and all. The following is a fair example of the product of the Reverend Mr. Wigglesworth's poetic frenzy:

Anne Bradstreet.
Michael Wigglesworth.

"They wring their hands, their caitiff-hands
and gnash their teeth for terrour;
They cry, they roar for anguish sore,
and gnaw their tongues for horrour.
But get away with out delay,
Christ pities not your cry:
Depart to Hell, there may you yell,
and roar Eternally."

Sad to relate, the poem was as popular in its day (and its day lasted a hundred years) as the *Psalm of Life* has been in ours.

Of some thirty pre-revolutionary writers of verse whose names stand recorded in the more elaborate histories of our literature, one more may be mentioned here. This was Thomas Godfrey, a watchmaker's apprentice of Philadelphia, who died in the South in 1763 at the age of twenty-seven. His poems were published two years later. The most notable among them was *The Prince of Parthia*, a blank-verse tragedy, which, though like the rest crudely juvenile, points at least to an intimate acquaintance with the dramas of Shakespeare. The imitation is sometimes very bald. These lines, for example, are a clear echo of Horatio's:

Thomas Godfrey.

"E'en the pale dead, affrighted at the horror,
As though unsafe, start from their marble jails,
And howling through the streets are seeking shelter."

And these, of Lear's:

"Dead! she's cold and dead!
Her eyes are closed, and all my joys are flown.
Now burst, ye elements, from your restraint,
Let order cease, and chaos be again,
Break! break, tough heart!"*

But there are also passages that show a power quite independent of imitation, and Thomas Godfrey deserves to be

* See *Hamlet*, I., i., 115; *Lear*, III., ii.

remembered as the first of America's few adventurers into the dramatic field. His drama was a closet drama only. The first native play to be regularly staged and acted was (probably—it is never safe to be positive about such matters) Royall Tyler's satirical comedy, *The Contrast*, 1786.

THEOLOGY

History, poetry, and theology,—these three were the forms in which colonial literature chiefly enshrined itself, and the greatest of these was theology. The Puritans who settled New England were practically religious refugees, men seeking a land where they should be free to worship as their consciences dictated. Their government was essentially theocratic—God was their great law-giver and the Bible their chief statute-book. The New England Primer was half catechism and prayer-book. The church, or meeting-house, was the centre of the community, and the ministers were the most learned men. It was inevitable that literature, which always reflects the highest intellectual and spiritual interests of a people, should take on a strong theological cast.

This theology—by which of course is meant, not religion itself, but a special system and doctrine of religion (in this case chiefly Calvinism)—appears first in the unlovely guise of controversy. The persecution which the Puritans had endured had not chastened them. They could be as intolerant of those who did not agree with them as ever their own persecutors had been, and in their course they saw no inconsistency. The profound conviction that they alone were right justified them—left, indeed, no other course open. In 1637 the Synod of Massachusetts took a definite stand against religious toleration. In the same year Anne Hutchinson was banished for heresy; and Roger Williams, the great apostle of toleration, had been banished two years before. Heresy became the crime of the age, and ministers thundered from the pulpit, while laymen poured out vials of printed wrath.

Perhaps the most striking book of this earlier period was Nathaniel Ward's *Simple Cobbler of Agawam*, published at London in 1647. Ward had himself been driven out of England for heresy by Archbishop Laud, and, to judge from his book, he found solace in America by attacking everything that offered a fair mark, from the doctrines of the Baptists to the Parisian millinery of the women. "I dare take upon me to be the herald of New England so far as to proclaim to the world, in the name of our colony, that all Familists, Antinomians, Anabaptists, and other enthusiasts, shall have free liberty—to keep away from us; and such as will come—to be gone as fast as they can, the sooner the better. . . . . To tell a practical lie is a great sin, but yet transient; but to set up a theoretical untruth is to warrant every lie that lies from its root to the top of every branch it hath, which are not a few!" Such proclamations would hardly win converts—the spirit is too warlike to be Christian. Yet the force and picturesqueness of the style suit well with the independence of the opinions, and it is easy to see behind them the earnestness of the man.

Nathaniel Ward.

Greater men than Ward took part in this theological conflict. There was John Cotton, one of the greatest pulpit orators of the time, who had likewise been driven from England by Laud, and who came from the old Boston to the new, which was named in his honor. With little of Ward's fiery and controversial temper, he had yet attempted to justify the banishment of Roger Williams, and when the latter, in defence, published his *Bloody Tenet of Persecution for Cause of Conscience* (1644), Cotton felt bound to reply to it with *The Bloody Tenet washed and made white in the Blood of the Lamb* (1647). Whereupon Williams naturally came forward again—but the very titles of the books are no longer worth reprinting.

John Cotton, 1585-1652.

Roger Williams, (?) 1604-1683.

In some respects this theological literature grew in time

even more stern, less beautiful. An age of fanaticism followed, marked by several manifestations, such as the Salem witchcraft craze of 1692 and the great religious revival of 1740–1745. It almost seems as if the Puritans, left to themselves in the wilderness (for there were few recruits from the old world after 1640), were in danger of reverting to the gross superstitions of primitive peoples. Their history proves at least that there can be education without enlightenment. Toward the end of the seventeenth century we find such book-titles as *Discourse Concerning Comets; Illustrious Providences; Memorable Providences relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions, with a Discourse on the Power and Malice of Devils; Wonders of the Invisible World.*

Cotton Mather, 1663-1728.

All the books just named were written by Increase and Cotton Mather, father and son, both eminent divines, and both indefatigable writers. Cotton Mather, indeed, stands clearly at the head of the writers of colonial New England. His grandfathers, John Cotton and Richard Mather, had been, like his father, preachers and writers before him, and his son was a preacher and writer after him. He was a prodigy of learning, who spent ten hours a day in his study, and who published in one year fourteen books and pamphlets, and in his life-time nearly four hundred. His great book, over which he prayed and fasted and wept, and which was published in folio—the only folio in our literature—in 1702, is entitled *Magnalia Christi Americana; or, The Ecclesiastical History of New England from its First Planting in the Year 1620 unto the Year of our Lord 1698.* It is primarily a church history, as the title and introduction indicate:

"I WRITE the WONDERS of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, flying from the depravations of Europe, to the American Strand; and, assisted by the Holy Author of that Religion, I do with all conscience of Truth, required therein by Him, who is the Truth itself, report the wonderful displays of His infinite Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and Faith-

fulness, wherewith His Divine Providence hath irradiated an Indian Wilderness."

The book is difficult to describe, difficult indeed to read, though as students of American literature we are bound to hold it in reverence; "the one single literary landmark," says Charles Francis Adams, "in a century and a half of colonial and provincial life—a geologic record of a glacial period." Our great New England writers have all been more or less familiar with it. Longfellow, for example, drew from it the legend versified in his poem, *The Phantom Ship*. But as a historical document it is quite untrustworthy in details; its chief value lies in the light which it throws upon the theological interests and the superstitious temper of the times. Its literary value, too, is slight. Beautiful and imaginative phrases may be found in it, but in a larger sense it can scarcely be said to have any style of its own, such a conglomeration is it of the fragmentary learning of all ages gathered together to embellish the plain statements beneath. All the pedantic vices of the fantastic school of folio writers are here in their most exaggerated form. The pages are sprinkled with learned allusions, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew phrases, quotations, italics, puns, Bible references, etc., etc. Thus, for example, runs the account of the presidents of Harvard College:

"After the death of Dr. Hoar, the place of President *pro tempore*, was put upon Mr. Urian Oakes, the excellent Pastor of the Church at Cambridge; who did *so*, and would *no otherwise* accept of the place; though the offer of a *full settlement* in the place was afterwards importunately made unto him. . . . . Reader, let us now upon another account behold the students of Harvard-Colledge, as a rendezvous of happy Druids, under the influence of so rare a President. But, alas! our joy must be short lived; for, on July 25, 1681, the stroak of a sudden death fell'd the tree, *Qui tantum inter caput extulit omnes*. . . . . Mr. Oakes, thus being transplanted into the better world, the Presidentship was immediately tendered unto Mr. Increase Mather; but his Church, upon the application of the overseers unto

them to dismiss him unto the place whereto he was now chosen, refusing to do it, he declined the motion. Wherefore, on April 10, 1682, Mr. John Rogers was elected unto that place. . . . . He was one of so sweet a temper, that the title of *deliciæ humani generis* might have on that score been given him; and his real *piety* set off with the accomplishments of a gentleman, as a gem set in gold. In his Presidentship, there fell out one thing particularly, for which the Colledge has cause to remember him. It was his custom to be somewhat *long* in his daily prayers (which our Presidents use to make) with the scholars in the Colledge-hall. But one day, without being able to give reason for it, he was not so long, it may be by half, as he used to be. Heaven knew the *reason!* The scholars, returning to their chambers, found one of them on fire, and the fire had proceeded so far, that if the devotions had held three minutes longer, the Colledge had been irrecoverably laid in ashes, which now was happily preserved. But him also a præmature death, on July 2, 1684, the day after the Commencement, snatcht away from a society that hoped for a much longer enjoyment of him, and counted themselves under as black an *eclipse* as the Sun did happen to be, at the hour of his expiration."

Imposing as this book was in its day, and important as it still is, it finds almost no readers now but students of history. The third and latest edition was published in 1852.

Theology took yet another turn,—from controversy, through fanaticism and superstition, back to abstract disquisition. In this last-named phase we see it most strikingly exhibited by the career and works of Jonathan Edwards, who was for twenty-three years pastor of the church at Northampton, Massachusetts, subsequently missionary to the Indians, and finally for a short time president of the college of New Jersey (Princeton). Edwards was a man of remarkable intellect, a born reasoner, and, living when and where he did, he naturally turned the powers of his brilliant mind to theology. He took the literal statements of the Bible, and with unshrinking logic pushed them to the most terrible conclusions. He could depict

Jonathan Edwards, 1703-1758.

—for with all his logic he had a poetic imagination—the glories of heaven and the happiness of the saints, but he became most notorious for those sermons which were devoted to portraying the miseries of the damned. The religious excitement of 1740–1745, known as "the Great Awakening," during which the English preacher Whitefield preached to assemblies of thirty thousand people on Boston Common, took its origin in Edwards's church. Edwards is best remembered, however, not for his sermons, but for his monumental work on the *Freedom of the Will*, published in 1754. In this he tried to prove that man is not a free agent and yet is responsible and punishable for all his misdeeds, and he argued so well that few have tried to confute him. Nevertheless, common sense to-day generally refuses to be troubled by such speculations, and the once famous treatise is more often alluded to than read. Jonathan Edwards stands simply as the one great metaphysician, or builder of a systematic philosophy, that America has produced. Emerson, in the next century, is a philosopher of a very different type.

John Woolman, 1720-1772.

There is one other writer who must be named in this connection, though his life touches the Revolutionary period and his work is not properly theology. This is John Woolman, of whom Charles Lamb said, "Get the writings of John Woolman by heart, and love the early Quakers." He was a New Jersey tailor and itinerant Friend who in his life-time published several tracts in opposition to the "Keeping of Negroes" and who died in 1772, leaving behind a *Journal* which was published in 1774. There have been many editions of the *Journal* since, one of the last having been edited by Whittier, and it would not be quite fair to say that Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* is the only American book of the eighteenth century that lives to-day. Woolman's book lives, although obscurely; indeed it has in it a simplicity and religious sincerity that will remind

one of Bunyan, together with a sweetness and tenderness even beyond Bunyan and sufficient to account for its hold upon life. One does not readily forget, for example, such a confession of youthful thoughtlessness and remorse as this:

"Once going to a neighbor's house, I saw on the way a robin sitting on her nest, and as I came near she went off, but having young ones, flew about, and with many cries expressed her concern for them. I stood and threw stones at her, till one striking her she fell down dead. At first I was pleased with the exploit, but after a few minutes was seized with horror, as having, in a sportive way, killed an innocent creature while she was careful of her young. I beheld her lying dead, and thought those young ones, for which she was so careful, must now perish for want of their dam to nourish them; and after some painful considerations on the subject, I climbed up the tree, took all the young birds, and killed them, supposing that better than to leave them to pine away and die miserably. And I believed in this case that Scripture proverb was fulfilled, 'The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.' I then went on my errand, but for some hours could think of nothing else but the cruelties I had committed, and was much troubled."

It is pleasant to relieve the impression left by the stern theologians of New England with this humble Christian diary of a New Jersey Quaker.

CHAPTER II

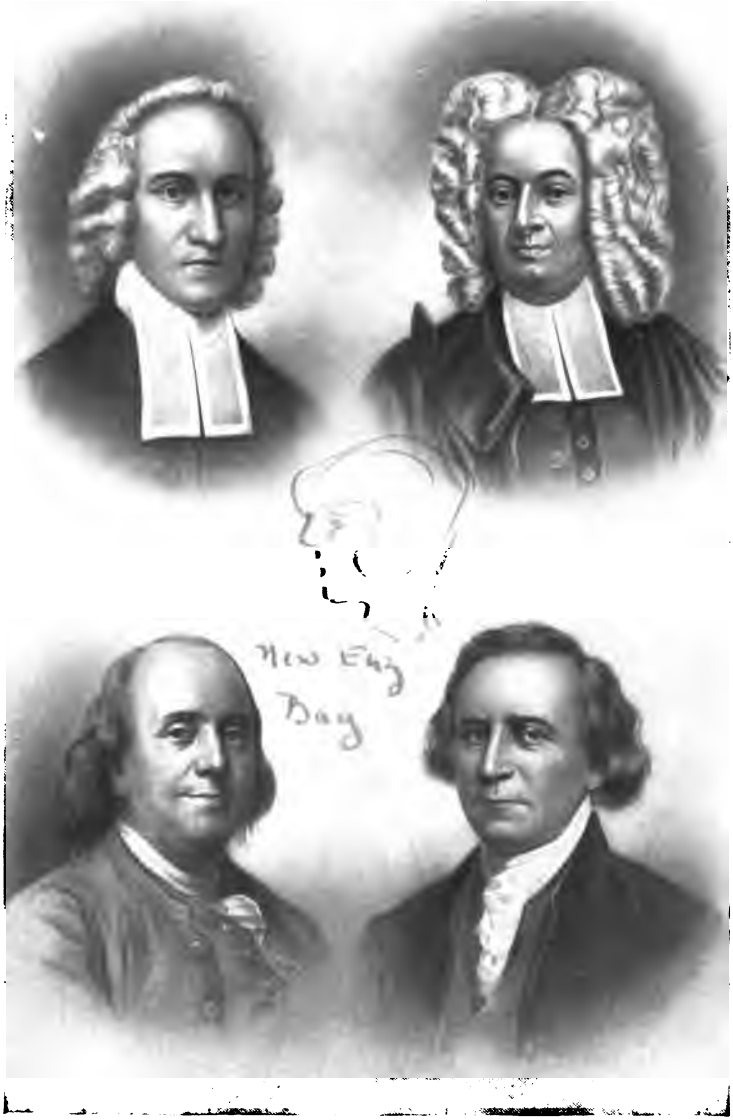
TRANSITION.—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

1706–1790

The figure of one great American looms large through the eighteenth century. Born but three years after the birth of Jonathan Edwards, and dying but nine years before the death of Washington, Benjamin Franklin spans with his career the entire transition from American colonial dependence to independence, union, and nationality. The story of this poor tallow-chandler's son and printer's apprentice, migrating from Boston to Philadelphia, and growing and expanding with the fortunes of his country until he came to be a lion of the social centres of Europe and ambassador to the courts of kings, reads like a romance. But stripped of its glamour it is seen to be a plain tale of sterling worth and tireless industry.

We shall not repeat it here: it is best read in his own words in the famous *Autobiography*. Nor does it come properly within the scope of a history of literature to enumerate the services which this many-sided man rendered to America and the world during his long career,—services which range from the invention of stoves to the demonstration that lightning and electricity are the same, and from the development of newspaper advertising to the drawing up of the first plan for the union of the American colonies. For Franklin was journalist, scientist, philosopher, statesman, diplomatist, and philanthropist in one. As for the writings

A Many-sided Character.



JONATHAN EDWARDS

COTTON MATHER

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

PHILIP FRENEAU

which he left behind him, though they fill nine volumes, they were produced incidentally, and were quite the least part of his life-work. His name does not primarily belong to literature.

Yet Franklin is for more than one reason exceedingly interesting to the student of literature. In the first place, his writings, like his life, mark a transition. He represents a new spirit in American letters—the change that had come over the people in the generations of their existence in the New World. The practical instincts,—self-reliance, shrewdness, humor, thrift,—all of those qualities that we sum up in the word *Yankee*, were being surely developed by a life of constant hardship and enforced self-denial. And Franklin is the first great exponent of them. While he still held to many of the sterner virtues of the Puritans, he found the mainspring of those virtues on earth rather than in heaven. He preached, not godliness, but honesty, charity, and manliness; and he accomplished quite as good results as the Puritans, by ordering his life, not as if he were going to die to-morrow, but rather as if he were going to live a hundred years. Such is the gospel of his *Poor Richard's Almanac*, through which he first came to fame; and the new American spirit at its best—and at its worst, too, for it was provincially rude and unenlightened, —is to be found reflected in the pages of that curious annual.

"*Poor Richard.*"

It will be remembered that an almanac was one of the first publications of the American press. Indeed it is only in our own day of cheap books and newspapers that this particular form of light literature, combining information and advice with amusement, has lost its popularity. But it is safe to say that no almanac issued as a private enterprise was ever better adapted to its patrons or became more justly celebrated than that which Franklin began to issue in Philadelphia in the year 1732 and continued, mainly under his own supervision, for twenty-five years. The price of it was five pence, and the sales ran up to

ten thousand copies a year. Such is its fame that to-day a single copy of the original will sell for twenty dollars. The *Almanac* professed to be written by "Richard Saunders, Philomath." There had been an English philomath of the same name, and there was also a famous English almanac called "Poor Robin." Of course the name "Poor Richard" was only a mask for Franklin, who openly announced himself as the printer of the pamphlet. That the philosophy of Poor Richard was not always original, "but rather the gleanings of the sense of all ages and nations," imports little. That was only to be expected in a publication of such a nature. Franklin's genius showed itself in the way in which his philosophy was gathered and adapted to the tastes and needs of his readers. Poor Richard, who, according to his own description, was "excessive poor" and his "wife, good woman, excessive proud," became a very real personage to the thousands of people in all stations of life who quoted his pithy maxims and recited his homely verses. These were given the readier currency for the humor that so often accompanied them. Indeed, the comic feature of the *Almanac* became easily its distinctive one, so that Poor Richard stands as a kind of forebear to a long line of droll philosophers, from Diedrich Knickerbocker to Tom Sawyer. The humor is frequently of a kind that the taste of the present age would denounce as vulgar or even obscene, but the general tone of the maxims is as wholesome as it is hearty.

"God helps them that help themselves."

"He that drinks fast pays slow."

"It is hard for an empty sack to stand upright."

"Silks and satins, scarlet and velvets, put out the kitchen fire."

"The poor man must walk to get meat for his stomach, the rich man to get a stomach to his meat."

"Three may keep a secret, if two of them are dead."

"A good conscience is a continual Christmas."

"He that by the plow would thrive
Himself must either hold or drive."

And so they run on: "Keep thy shop," "Early to bed,"—nearly every tongue will finish them of its own accord, so familiar are they. This is literature only by a very liberal definition indeed, but it is such literature as everybody could and did read, and its influence for good is beyond all calculation. The sayings were gathered together into a kind of running sermon for the preface of the edition of 1758, and this preface, under such titles as "Father Abraham's Speech," "The Way to Wealth," "La Science du Bonhomme Richard,"* has been printed literally hundreds of times and translated into more than a dozen languages.

"Autobiography."

The *Almanac*, which afforded Franklin fame and competence in his early manhood, was late in life supplemented by a work of greater literary importance. This is his *Autobiography*, the only American book written before the nineteenth century that is still widely known and read. Its history is interesting. Franklin of course did not mean to write a book—we have said that he was not primarily a man of letters. It was in 1771, while he was at the country home of the Bishop of St. Asaphs, in Hampshire, England, that he occupied some moments of leisure in writing out an account of his early life in the form of a letter to his son, then Governor of New Jersey. Thirteen years later, after the manuscript had been actually thrown into the street in Philadelphia and picked up by a friend, who begged the author to complete it, Franklin, then at Passy, France, added

* The *Bon Homme Richard* (that is, "Goodman Richard"), the famous flagship of Paul Jones, was named by Jones in honor of Franklin at the time when Jones was put in command of it through Franklin's advice to the French government.

another chapter. And four years later still, at Philadelphia, only two years before his death, he continued the narrative, bringing it down to 1757, the year of the beginning of his public services abroad. A copy of this account having been sent to a friend in France, a portion of it was there translated into French and published, shortly after Franklin's death. This, it seems,—though the whole history is somewhat obscure,—was turned into English again and published at London in 1793. Not till 1817 was there a direct publication of the manuscript, and not till 1868 of the original first draft.

The book, though composed in this haphazard manner, and though incomplete and ill proportioned, is not without merits of style. Franklin has told us himself how studiously he cultivated his style, taking for his model Addison. But it is simplicity, rather than any studied grace, that gives the *Autobiography* its charm. To this must be added a resolute moral purpose, everywhere apparent yet never morbid or offensive. The work was frankly intended for the instruction of Franklin's son, and it was a most happy accident that so incalculably widened its office. Boys are no longer in demand to cut wicks for tallow candles; even typesetting is a languishing trade; but "self-made men" are still held in honor, and America will not soon reach the stage when her youth can afford to omit the reading of this simple life-story of one of her greatest men.

Franklin wrote nothing else of large significance, though he wrote many things, both in jest and in earnest, both to serve his country's need and to afford an outlet for energies that scarcely knew how to pass an idle hour. Many trifles written while he was in France, like "The Ephemera," "The Whistle," and the "Dialogue between Franklin and the Gout," designed for the amusement of the circle of wits who gathered about one Madame Brillon, or like the dream of the Elysian Fields in his letter to Madame Helvétius, show a French delicacy of fancy, a gayety and wit, that are suffi-

ciently rare in American letters and that are quite remarkable as coming from Franklin. They set one to wondering what this man might have done in literature had he chosen to be less of a statesman and philosopher. Such work as he did do, however, is on the whole purely American,—virile, blunt almost to rudeness, with only sufficient polish to give it currency. He inculcated, as we have seen, a practical morality only, and he did this best in plain, unvarnished prose. We can see his limitation clearly enough,—not exactly that he was no visionary, but that he was blind on the side of enthusiasm and idealization, that his eyes were shut to the poetry of life. His great defect was a defect of spirituality, and he stands in strong contrast to even such feebly poetical men as Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards. "There is a flower of religion, a flower of honor, a flower of chivalry," says Sainte-Beuve, "that you must not require of Franklin." Of course we remember the age. His life was fairly contemporaneous with that of the great French sceptic, Voltaire. And the eighteenth century in England was notoriously an age of prose, dull and unimaginative in comparison with the centuries before and the century after.

CHAPTER III

THE REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD.—INDEPENDENCE AND NATIONALITY

1765–1800

The review of colonial literature in the first chapter closed with the work of the theologians. It must not be supposed that theology died out in New England. It will be found after another century tingeing still the writings even of those who openly rebelled against the Puritanism of their forefathers. But interest in it had to give way before new and more vital issues. Men cease to speculate on the freedom of the will when their actual freedom of thought and deed is threatened. The colonies were steadily growing, from New Hampshire on the north to Georgia on the south. They were becoming commercially and politically important. They found themselves far away from the powers that governed them, and they felt those powers to be often sadly out of sympathy with their wishes and needs. There arose discontent, rebellion, revolution.

To trace in detail the growing sentiment among the colonies in favor of union, and the growing dissatisfaction with British rule, which led to the Declaration of Independence of 1776, is the business of the historian, and here a very few facts must suffice. The French and Indian War (1754–1763) had indirectly much to do with the movement by showing the necessity for union, perhaps also by proving the prowess of American arms; and the very year in which Edwards published his *Freedom of the Will* the youthful Washington marched with a regiment of soldiers into the western wilderness to

resist the claims of the French. But the more direct causes were the various measures passed by Parliament for the taxation of the colonies, from the Importation Act of 1733 to the Stamp Act of 1765. Some of the earliest and bitterest opposition came from Massachusetts, where, in 1761, we find the oratory of James Otis inciting among the people hints of resistance by arms. Fourteen years later, too, the first armed resistance came from Massachusetts. But the movement centralized farther south. In 1765 the young mountaineer Patrick Henry startled the Virginia House of Burgesses with his resolutions against British taxation. The First Colonial Congress met in 1765 at New York, the Second in 1774 at Philadelphia; the Declaration of Independence was signed at Philadelphia; the man chosen for commander-in-chief of the army and destined to become first President of the Union was a Virginian.

The literature of the time might be expected to follow the course of these events, and in large measure it does. But this period, like the century and a half that had gone before, was not fruitful of good literature. For the most part it produced only the fleeting record of its own immediate concerns, in the form of revolutionary speeches, state documents, patriotic songs. These are all sincere enough and touch some of the noblest passions of humanity, but they lack art; and it takes art as well as sincerity to make any work lasting. The calm, the impartiality, the sense of perspective which art requires, are not at the command of one who celebrates contemporary events. Franklin in his old age could write with masterly skill the story of his youth, but not even Franklin, granting him the poetic powers which he lacked, could have fitly sung our nation's birth. It was reserved for Hawthorne, in the nineteenth century, to transfer Puritanism from history to literature, and our romancers are only just beginning to busy themselves seriously with our revolutionary age.

ORATORY AND POLITICAL PROSE

It would be idle to review at length the oratory of the period, or to single out the merits of this or that orator, from James Otis of Massachusetts, whom John Adams likened to a "flame of fire," to Patrick Henry of Virginia, who spoke, thought Jefferson, "as Homer wrote." These men spoke for their time, and not ineffectually; and their speeches, devoutly preserved, fired the youthful patriotism of several generations and served as models to orators whose fame has since partially eclipsed their own. But we scarcely revert to their speeches now. If we do, we find them often painfully "academic"; the ideas are couched in stately and pompous phrase—long, balanced sentences, resonant, Latinized diction, elaborate figures. We half fancy the orators must have been cold and unimpassioned weighers of words and polishers of periods. It was not so. Their style was the only style taught and approved in their day. Precisely such oratory was to be expected of an age which in England elevated almost to the position of a literary dictator Samuel Johnson. Yet a few of the words then uttered echo still. We shall be slow indeed to forget that cry of Patrick Henry, the most gifted, least academic speaker of them all—that cry which is the largest and deepest expression of the spirit of the age: "Give me liberty or give me death." But our Revolution brought forth no Edmund Burke, eloquent, cultured, and profound, to measure himself with Demosthenes and Cicero of old. With the noble *Farewell Address* of Washington in 1796, the old issues were fairly closed. Daniel Webster, our greatest orator, belongs wholly to another era.

On the documentary side the literature was good, as such literature goes. The *Declaration of Independence* easily takes rank with the great state papers of history, not alone because of its political significance but also because of its lofty theme and its earnest and dignified expression. It was composed, of course, with the im-

Thomas Jefferson, 1743-1826.

mediate object of making a wide popular appeal,—"a kind of war-song" says Professor Tyler,—and it was but natural that it should contain some "glittering generalities" and that its eloquence should approach grandiloquence. But it has stood a long and severe test, and stood it well; and no one, whether in youth or age, can read it to-day without some stir of emotion. To Thomas Jefferson belongs the chief credit of composing it, and Jefferson was a writer of considerable ability. His *Summary View of the Rights of British America*, published in 1774, attracted contemporary attention in England, where it was republished by Edmund Burke. Moreover his voluminous and scholarly letters, which make up the bulk of his collected works, give him a respectable rank among writers of a class of literature that has been much neglected since his day.

Thomas Paine, 1737-1809.

A most picturesque figure of this period, and one closely associated in ideas with Jefferson, was Thomas Paine, an Englishman who came to America in 1774, at the age of thirty-seven. He had neither the solid attainments nor the cultivated tastes of Jefferson, but he had all of Jefferson's radicalism and was utterly fearless in parading it. Jefferson had written on the *Rights of America*. Paine wrote later, in England, on the *Rights of Man*. He was an open sceptic and scoffer, at war generally with the established order of things. Such a revolutionary spirit belongs to no land, and when the American cause was won, Paine followed the torch of revolution to France, declaring, "Where Liberty is not, there is my home." After spending a considerable time there and in England he returned to America, where he died in 1809. On the whole, Thomas Paine has been too persistently remembered for his violence and his so-called atheism, too little for his naturally humane instincts. His coarse and superficial *Age of Reason* may well be neglected. Besides, that book, like the *Rights of Man*, was not written in America. What Americans should remember him for are his

'seventy-six pamphlet, *Common Sense*, which may have turned the tide of popular sentiment toward independence, and the series of tracts, entitled *The Crisis*, which he published through the long and terrible struggle that followed. *Common Sense* was said to have been worth an army of twenty thousand men to the American cause, while the sixteen successive numbers of *The Crisis*, widely distributed among the soldiers, did priceless service in keeping alive their patriotism through the darkest hours of Long Island and Valley Forge. It was in *Common Sense* that Paine called George the Third the "royal brute of Britain," and it was the first number of *The Crisis* that opened with the still famous sentence, "These are the times that try men's souls."

Conspicuous among the statesmen who stood in opposition to the extreme democratic views of men like Jefferson, were Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay. While the adoption of the Constitution was still in debate and strongly opposed by the "State-rights" theorists, these men ably supported it in a series of eighty-five papers published anonymously in a New York journal and issued collectively in 1788 under the title of *The Federalist*. The papers are political essays of a high type, broad in principle, sound in argument, and stately in style, and are well worth the study of those who would cultivate that kind of writing.

"The Federalist."

POETRY

The verse of the period, like the prose, rarely succeeded in detaching itself from current events; that is to say, its inspiration was fitful and its aims were immediate and practical rather than ultimate and artistic. Patriotic songs and ballads, satires, squibs for the corners of newspapers, were the staple verse products. *Yankee Doodle*, of somewhat obscure origin, sprang then into a popularity that has

Songs and Ballads.

waned only with the elevation of popular taste. Even then, it was carried chiefly by its air, and belongs rather to music than to literature. Music and patriotism together carried many a song of slender literary merits, such as Timothy Dwight's hymn, *Columbia, Columbia, to Glory Arise*, composed while its author was chaplain in the army during the campaign against Burgoyne in 1777, and Joseph Hopkinson's *Hail Columbia*, first sung at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia in 1798, to the popular air of "President's March."

In 1775, 1776 John Trumbull, a Connecticut lawyer, published a burlesque epic with the title of *M'Fingal*, which he expanded into four cantos in 1782. It was a vigorous satire upon the Tories, and proved a powerful support to the Revolution in that divided age, running to thirty editions. In outward form it was modelled pretty closely after Butler's *Hudibras*, the famous English satire upon the Puritans. Bombast, coarse wit, a lilting measure, and bad double rhymes are almost necessary ingredients of a poem whose hero, Squire M'Fingal, "the vilest Tory in the town," is tried, condemned, tied to a pole, tarred, and subjected to a shower of down until

> "Not Milton's six-wing'd angel gathers
> Such superfluity of feathers."

Unquestionably the best ballad of the time that has come down to us is an anonymous production, *Hale in the Bush*, composed in memory of the fate of young Nathan Hale, who was executed as a spy in September, 1776:

> "The breezes went steadily through the tall pines,
> A saying 'oh hu-ush!' a saying 'oh hu-ush!'
> As stilly stole by a bold legion of horse,
> For Hale in the bush, for Hale in the bush."

The haunting quality of this opening stanza will be readily felt, and the entire poem is much superior to the earliest recorded and once famous American ballad of *Lovewell's Fight* (composed

about 1724). In point of popularity, however, there was nothing among Revolutionary ballads to compete with the humorous *Battle of the Kegs—kags* the word must have been pronounced, if rhyming it with *bags* be trustworthy evidence. It was written in 1778 by Francis Hopkinson, a Philadelphia lawyer and signer of the Declaration of Independence, and father of the writer of *Hail Columbia.* Some kegs filled with powder and provided with a lighted fuse had been sent floating down among the British ships at Philadelphia and were promptly fired upon "with amazing courage."

> "The kegs, 'tis said, tho' strongly made
> Of rebel staves and hoops, Sir,
> Could not oppose their powerful foes,
> The conquering British troops, Sir."

All this popular verse barely escapes being dismissed as doggerel. The kind of height to which it could rise may be illustrated, perhaps, by one final example from Joel Barlow's *Hasty Pudding.* Barlow, like Dwight and Trumbull, was a Yale man of poetic proclivities, and in 1793, while he was abroad in Savoy, a dish of savory *polenta* stirred the memories of his palate and provoked his muse:

> "I sing the sweets I know, the charms I feel,
> My morning incense, and my evening meal,
> The sweets of Hasty Pudding. Come, dear bowl,
> Glide o'er my palate, and inspire my soul.
> The milk beside thee, smoking from the kine,
> Its substance mingled, married in with thine,
> Shall cool and temper thy superior heat
> And save the pains of blowing while I eat."

He dedicated the poem, which was published in 1796, to Mrs. Washington, without any fear that the "first lady of the land" might be above taking interest in the homely concerns of a housewife. The flavor of the poem, like that of the corn-meal which goes to make the pudding, is a little strong, but our grandfathers relished it.

There were more serious attempts at poetry than these—some, indeed, most serious. Dr. Dwight, of *Columbia* fame, tried his hand at an epic in eleven books and ten thousand lines, *The Conquest of Canaan* (1785); and Joel Barlow wrote a *Vision of Columbus* (1787) which was afterwards expanded into the ten books of *The Columbiad* (1807). But in both style and spirit these poems were weakly imitative of a school of English poetry already defunct. The curse of conventionality is over them. Warriors, for example, are never said to come to swords' points, but one hero on another "pours the tempest of resistless war." If the night is bright, the moon is "sole empress on her silver throne"; if dark, a cloud "involves the moon and wraps the world in shade." Perhaps no American poem has aspired higher or fallen lower than *The Columbiad*, which at the very outset challenges comparison with the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid:*

Heroic Verse.

> "I sing the mariner who first unfurled
> An eastern banner o'er the western world,
> And taught mankind where future empires lay
> In these fair confines of descending day."

And the poem proceeds, in ponderous fashion, to uphold juster ideas of honor than those of old Homer, whose existence, the author stoutly maintained, "had proved one of the signal misfortunes of mankind." Barlow's purpose was good. "This," he declared, "is the moment in America to give such a direction to poetry, painting, and the other fine arts, that true and useful ideas of glory may be implanted in the minds of men." But the poetry was not good, and the minds of men refused to take kindly to such implanting. Epics have not flourished on American soil.

Philip Freneau, 1752-1832.

There was, however, one American who before 1800 produced poetry that can still be read for its own sake. This was Philip Freneau. Freneau was born at New York in 1752, of a family that had originally been French Protestant refugees. He was gradu-

ated from Princeton several years before the outbreak of the Revolutionary War and immediately entered upon an active and varied career, becoming journalist, editor, trader, sea-captain, and government clerk by turns. His voyages took him to the Madeiras and the West Indies; and at one time he suffered the horrors of imprisonment on a British prison-ship at New York. He was still a hale man of eighty when, having set out one December evening to walk to his home, about two miles from Monmouth, New Jersey, he lost his way in a violent snow-storm and perished.

Freneau was best known in his own day as a "patriot poet," having contributed to the newspapers, especially during the war, numerous occasional verses inspired by his hatred of the British and the royalists. The character of these, as of a whole flood of similar verse of the time, may be judged from the opening lines of *A Prophecy* (1782):

"When a certain great king, whose initial is G,
Shall force stamps upon paper and folks to drink tea;
When these folks burn his tea and stampt paper like stubble,
You may guess that this king is then coming to trouble.

. . . . . .

But when B and C with their armies are taken,
This king will do well if he saves his own bacon.
In the year seventeen hundred and eighty and two,
A stroke he shall get that will make him look blue;
In the years eighty-three, eighty-four, eighty-five,
You hardly shall know that the king is alive;
In the year eighty-six the affair will be over,
And he shall eat turnips that grow in Hanover."

These verses, though rather above the average of the age, are still only such as we might expect from a man of Freneau's restless and adventuresome spirit, and were probably written with a galloping pen. They have long since become obsolete. But in calmer moods Freneau produced work of more lasting qualities. A few of his poems deal with native American

scenes and themes, and two or three among these, such as *Eutaw Springs** and *The Indian Burying-Ground*, are usually selected as examples of his poetic genius at its best. Scott gave testimony to his appreciation of the former by adopting, with a slight change, one of its lines for his *Marmion* (Introduction to Canto III.),—

"And took the spear, but left the shield;"

while Campbell borrowed for his *O'Connor's Child* the fine fancy at the close of the following stanza from *The Indian Burying-Ground:*

"By midnight moons, o'er moistening dews,
In vestments for the chase arrayed,
The hunter still the deer pursues,
The hunter and the deer—a shade."

Freneau's most ambitious poem is *The House of Night*, written while he was in Jamaica, at the age of twenty-four. It is grimly imaginative, and possibly, in places, foreshadows the genius of Poe, but it is a very uneven production and has been overpraised. Far better is the little lyric of four stanzas, *The Wild Honeysuckle* (*Poems*, 1795), in which this native flower is apostrophized in all its modest, evanescent beauty:

"Fair flower, that dost so comely grow,
Hid in this silent, dull retreat,
Untouched thy honeyed blossoms blow,
Unseen thy little branches greet;
No roving foot shall find thee here,
No busy hand provoke a tear.

. . . . . .

"From morning suns and evening dews
At first thy little being came;
If nothing once, you nothing lose,
For when you die you are the same;
The space between is but an hour,
The frail duration of a flower."

* Freneau's title was "To the Memory of the Brave Americans, under General Greene, who Fell in the Action of September 8, 1781."

Most critics have cared to remember of Freneau only this one lyric, but he essayed another and rather more difficult kind of verse with such success that it should not be overlooked. This is "social verse,"—a somewhat inexact and general term for various kinds of sentimental effusions that are light without levity and grave without gravity, that, in other words, range freely all the way from laughter to tears without quite touching upon either. Freneau could write a most pathetic tribute *To the Dog Sancho* who nearly lost his life defending his master's cabin against midnight robbers; or he could compose a graceful ditty on *A Lady's Singing Bird*, or on *Pewter Platter Alley;* but his best efforts in this direction are distinctly bacchanalian, celebrating the praises of wine and the joys of tavern life. *The Parting Glass*, *On the Ruins of a Country Inn*, *To a Honey Bee*, are poems that should not be allowed to drop out of our anthologies, all the more because we have so few of the kind. The last named is especially happy. The tippler addresses a wandering bee that has alighted on his glass:

"Welcome!—I hail you to my glass;
All welcome here you find;
Here let the cloud of trouble pass,
Here be all care resigned.
This fluid never fails to please,
And drown the griefs of men or bees."

But the bee finally succeeds in drowning itself as well as its griefs:

"Do as you please, your will is mine;
Enjoy it without fear,
And your grave will be this glass of wine,
Your epitaph—a tear.
Go, take your seat in Charon's boat;
We'll tell the hive, you died afloat."

William Clifton, a young Philadelphian of promise who

died in 1799, also produced a few occasional poems, which were published in 1800, the best one of which —a bit of melodious social verse with the refrain of "Friendship, Love, Wine, and a Song"—scarcely suffers by comparison with the lyrics of Freneau. And in 1780, while the result of the Revolution still hung in the balance, there appeared an anonymous drinking song with a strong patriotic ring, *The Volunteer Boys*, of which it seems worth while to preserve still an echo, if only that we may catch at this distance a little of the spirit of our forefathers:

More Occasional Verse.

"Hence with the lover who sighs o'er his wine,
Chloes and Phillises toasting;
Hence with the slave who will whimper and whine,
Of ardour and constancy boasting;
Hence with love's joys,
Follies and noise,—
The toast that I give is the Volunteer Boys."

From this time on the echoes of the Revolution grew rapidly more and more faint, and though they did not cease until well into the next century, we shall find, when we take up the thread of poetry again, that the character of the poetry was materially changed.

PART II

THE CREATIVE IMPULSE

FROM MAINE TO GEORGIA

1800–1860

THE CREATIVE IMPULSE.

INDEPENDENCE was won. A federal constitution had been adopted and a government organized under its provisions. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the capital had been permanently fixed at Washington, a second president had quietly given way to a third of a different party, and the United States were a political fact to be reckoned with in the councils of nations. It remained for them to prove themselves worthy of the position they held, and to carry on in America the work of European civilization and culture. Foreign trade existed of course—in ten years the exports had increased from twenty to seventy millions of dollars; here and there, too, a man of an investigating and inventive turn of mind, like Benjamin Franklin, had contributed something to the practical knowledge of mankind; but in that higher kind of commerce of which trade reviews and public records take little note, the New World had as yet given really nothing in exchange for what it received. Would it ever have anything to give? European critics of art and literature dared to ask the question, for it was the common belief in Europe that, as Irving humorously put it, "all animals degenerated in America, and man among the number."

The answer to their question did not come at once—it is not even yet such as we should like to make—but it came. The cause of popular education, so cherished by the Americans from the first, was taken up with new zeal. Noah Webster's famous *Speller* appeared in 1783, Lindley Murray's *English Grammar* in 1795, and Webster's *Compendious Dictionary* in 1806. And in literature proper, the creative impulse was plainly asserting itself. From the beginning of the century, when Charles Brockden Brown of Philadelphia deliberately

took up the profession of letters, there was a conscious awakening of literary activity. The manifestations of that activity were most marked in New York, and that city, within ten years, had among her ninety thousand inhabitants an author —Irving—who was destined to win for American letters some recognition in the literary circles of Europe.

Still, progress was slow. For after the decade that passed between Brown's first novel in 1798 and Irving's *Knickerbocker History* in 1809, it was almost another decade before there was anything worth adding to the record. Then, in 1817, came Bryant's *Thanatopsis;* in 1818, Paulding's *Backwoodsman;* in 1819, the poems of Drake and Halleck; in 1819, 1820, Irving's *Sketch-Book;* in 1821, Cooper's *Spy*. Ten years more found some of these writers distinguished. In 1832 Bryant, then editor of the New York *Evening Post*, was bringing out his second volume of poems, Cooper's tales were being widely translated in Europe, and Irving was at length come back from his seventeen years' residence abroad to receive the highest honors from his countrymen. By that time, too, Longfellow, Poe, Hawthorne, Emerson, Whittier, Holmes, and Lowell were either appearing or soon to appear above the literary horizon. Another thirty years and the United States had a respectable body of national literature, that body of literature which, as we said at the outset, has now become classic.

We need not deceive ourselves as to its relative importance. America has no world-names, no literature or art that are secure in the sense in which Plato and Shakespeare, the Iliad and the Song of Solomon, the Parthenon and the Laokoon, are secure. But the United States have built up a nationality through years of trial and heroic endeavor, and have brought forth men spiritually gifted to tell the story. It is the record of those years, sixty or seventy roundly speaking, years in which, said Cooper, the nation was passing from the gristle into the bone, that we now purpose to review in detail.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW ENVIRONMENT.—BROWN, IRVING, COOPER, BRYANT

To the inhabitants of the United States of one hundred years ago, the New World was in some respects quite as old as it is to us. It had always been their home and their fathers' home. It had a continuous history of two hundred years, and the Pilgrim Fathers were as remote to Irving and Bryant as Cotton Mather is to us—that is, if we measure by time alone. But if we measure by achievements, we must alter our perspective. In its unexplored area, its untamed natives, its undeveloped resources, the country was still new, and it was consciously so. It was consciously new, too, in its dearth of art and literature. The ocean and the wilderness, the motley-peopled sea-ports, the vast inland lakes, the pine forests, the stubborn New England soil and climate, the little log schoolhouse, the quaint Dutch burgher, the southern planter, the prowling Indian, were all accepted in a matter-of-fact spirit, and scarcely a poet or painter had looked upon them yet with an imaginative eye. Two centuries of the primitive, heroic age of America had already passed, and there was no epic song. But at last, in the peace of established nationhood, the new environment, so fast becoming old, was yielding its inspiration to native art.

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN, 1771-1810

Philip Freneau failed to follow up worthily in days of peace the gift which he had exercised in more eventful times, and as he had no contemporary of similar gifts, poetry lay

dormant. The new impulse was to be felt first in prose,—as it chanced, in prose fiction, a form of art that was being rapidly developed in England. That novels had been in free circulation in America for some time is attested by Noah Webster, who, in an essay on woman's education, written about 1790, complained that "a hundred volumes of modern novels may be read without acquiring a new idea." They must have been the products of English pens. Of American writers in this field during the eighteenth century, one might almost say that the names of but two are remembered—Mrs. Susanna Rowson and Mrs. Tabitha Tenney; and their numerous novels may be dismissed as unworthy of record, though one of Mrs. Rowson's, *Charlotte Temple*, a crude hysterical production published in 1790 (declared, by the way, to be "a tale of truth"), may still be found in pamphlet issues and doubtless has still some power of drawing tears. The year 1798, however, marked the advent of a romancer of somewhat more than passing worth—Charles Brockden Brown.

Life.

Brown was born at Philadelphia in 1771 and died there in 1810. Sickly in body from childhood, he somewhat illogically determined to devote his energy to the cultivation of his mind. He became a diligent student of language and literature, laboring to make himself a master of style, and, after some dallying with the law, adopted the profession of letters outright—the first man in America to take such a step and succeed well enough to be remembered for it. Though he came of a Quaker family, he held very liberal views: his first publication, *Alcuin* (1797), was a dialogue on the rights of women. His sensitive and imaginative temperament was one to respond quickly to the extravagances of the age, and it was an age of revolutionary ardors and aspirations, an age which produced Shelleys and "iridescent dreams." Brown's nature, however, was not long in finding the proper field of its activity in fiction. In the brief space of four years, from

1798 to 1801, he published six novels, or romances,* of considerable length. But with this outburst his creative power seems to have exhausted itself, for he devoted the remainder of his short life to journalism.

Character of his Works.

Brown had much talent and some of the marks of genius, and there can be little doubt that, if he had lived at a later period in the development of fiction and had been given a stronger constitution, he would have produced work of a high order. As it is, his *Wieland*, *Arthur Mervyn*, *Edgar Huntly*, and the rest, can command only a qualified praise. Their strength is great, but their weakness is greater, and while there will always be some to read them with an interest mounting to absorption, most people will be repelled by the sheer horror of their themes and their grave offences against art. To begin with, they are written in a strange style, at once nervous and stilted. The sentences are short, hammering, and monotonous,—quite unlike the elaborate and carefully modulated sentences affected by the political orators and essayists of the time. The phrases, on the contrary, are roundabout, and the words are the same long Latin derivatives that the lawyers and the statesmen loved to roll under their tongues. The result is a peculiar compound of abruptness and formalism. For example, the first three paragraphs of *Wieland* open thus: "I feel little reluctance in complying with your

*It is well to use these names carefully. *Fiction* is a general term for imaginative prose. *Tale* is an old word, once applied to almost any kind of story, true or false. It is now chiefly limited to stories of adventure, stories in which the interest lies in the events. A *romance* is a kind of elaborated and heightened tale, drawing its interest largely from the picturesque, the marvellous, the supernatural. The *novel*, of later development, aims to keep more closely to actual or possible life, and to portray character as affecting or affected by circumstances. The *short story* corresponds to the novel somewhat as the tale does to the romance, in being less elaborate. All the terms overlap, however, *tale* and *romance* in particular being still often used interchangeably; and even though we keep the definitions distinct, any particular story is likely to have characteristics of both tale and romance, or of both romance and novel. Brown's stories may very properly be called either romances or novels.

request"—"My state is not destitute of tranquillity"—"I address no supplication to the Deity." Modern prose would prefer to say: "I am quite willing to do as you wish"—"I have moments of peace"—"I make no prayers to God." In another place the revival of hope is described as "the re-exaltation of that luminary of whose effulgencies I had so long and so liberally partaken." Certainly no critic in Brown's day would have found this style offensive, and the poet Shelley, it may be said, read the tales with eagerness; but it is impossible for readers to-day not to be very differently moved.

The same thing is true of the exaggerated sentimentalism of the tales. Sentimentalism was characteristic of the fiction just then popular in England, from Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling* to Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, the most widely read novel of the time. Brown revels in situations that call for display of feeling, especially of the so-called tender emotions; and such phrases as "extreme sensibility," "impressionable nature," "tears of delicious sympathy," "agony of fondness," "effusions of gratitude," "paroxysms of grief," sprinkle his pages.

But the most striking feature of the stories is the machinery of mystery and terror which supports the plot. This, too, had its English model in the "Gothic" romances of the time, of which Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* and Mrs. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* are famous examples. Secret passages, sliding panels, unearthly voices, midnight murders, and vanishing trails tend to keep the reader in a creepy state of body and mind. Of course these are good romantic devices; only Brown, true to his "advanced" ideas, would not allow them to stand frankly on their emotional and artistic value. He felt obliged to support every fancy by a fact, attested in a footnote if need be, and to find a natural explanation for his wildest absurdities. Thus he drags in the phenomena of sleepwalking, mental hallucination, and the like. The effect is not what he calculated, for his plots are made only the more absurd

and trivial. He failed to understand that the imagination will accept the impossible but resents the improbable. Thus by straining probability and allowing momentous events to turn upon light causes, he weakens the reader's interest and makes him critical. In *Wieland*, for example, Theodore Wieland, a religious fanatic, murders his wife and children at the bidding of certain "divine voices." The voices turn out to be merely the trick of a scoundrelly ventriloquist. That such a thing might happen, no one will deny, but it is extremely improbable; and if it did happen, we should expect to find the account of it among the items of a sensational newspaper, and not in a romance written for our edification.

It is impossible to illustrate these things fully here, but some idea of Brown's style, as well as of his predilection for gruesome themes, may be obtained from the following extract. It is the beginning of the famous description, in *Arthur Mervyn*, of the yellow fever epidemic at Philadelphia in 1793, which he himself had witnessed and suffered from:

"The sun had nearly set before I reached the precincts of the city. I pursued the track which I had formerly taken, and entered High Street after nightfall. Instead of equipages and a throng of passengers, the voice of levity and glee, which I had formerly observed, and which the mildness of the season would, at other times, have produced, I found nothing but a dreary solitude.

"The market-place, and each side of this magnificent avenue, were illuminated, as before, by lamps; but between the verge of Schuylkill and the heart of the city I met not more than a dozen figures; and these were ghostlike, wrapped in cloaks, from behind which they cast upon me glances of wonder and suspicion, and, as I approached, changed their course, to avoid touching me. Their clothes were sprinkled with vinegar, and their nostrils defended from contagion by some powerful perfume.

"I cast a look upon the houses, which I recollected to have formerly been, at this hour, brilliant with lights, resounding with lively voices, and thronged with busy faces. Now they were closed, above and below; dark, and without tokens of being inhabited. From the

upper windows of some, a gleam sometimes fell upon the pavement I was traversing, and showed that their tenants had not fled, but were secluded or disabled.

"These tokens were new, and awakened all my panics. Death seemed to hover over this scene, and I dreaded that the floating pestilence had already lighted on my frame."

This is excellent in its kind, and the audacious realism of the passages that follow fairly takes one's breath, almost challenging comparison with similar passages in Boccaccio, Manzoni, or Defoe. But the kind is morbid, even though the artist's hand is strong enough to keep him clear of the hysterical. And in the case of Brown's work the psychological analysis that attends it all makes the matter worse. There is endless deliberation without action, wearisome pausing to portray every slightest phase of every fleeting sensation. Nor is there any touch of humor to relieve the prevailing gloom.

One thing in this work is to be praised without reserve. Notwithstanding his adherence to the methods of the British novelists, Brown had the courage to give his stories always a New World background, now the city of Philadelphia or of Baltimore, now the wilds of the Pennsylvania forests. The suburban villas with their avenues of catalpas, the settler's clay-plastered log cabin and square acre of clearing tilled with the hoe, the panther in his cave, the Indian with his tomahawk,—these are living pictures out of a century that is gone and are worth many volumes of sentimental scenes. Here indeed Brown was a pioneer, and in this reliance upon local color he anticipates Cooper, just as in psychological analysis he anticipates Poe and Hawthorne, and in unshrinking realism the writers of a modern French school. For the rest, his romances are instructive more as examples of what other romancers should avoid than of what they should imitate. He did not have Scott or Hawthorne to teach him.

He belonged to the experimental period of English fiction, and he suffered the common fate that attends early experiments.

MINOR EARLY FICTION

Brown's early devotion to romantic fiction was shortlived, and he does not seem to have communicated the impulse, genuine as it was, to any worthy contemporary or successor. His only contemporaries, indeed, were such as the negligible Mrs. Rowson and Mrs. Tenney afore-mentioned; and those who followed him after an interval of nearly twenty years were, with the shining exceptions of Irving and Cooper, little more important. Yet a few of these latter need mention.

John Neal, 1793-1876.

John Neal, of Maine, began in 1817 a long and industrious literary career, and his scores of novels (*Logan*, 1821; *Seventy-Six*, 1822; *The Down-Easters*, 1833) portray in a vigorous, if somewhat erratic fashion, certain phases of American life. But Neal, who boasted of writing three volumes in twenty-seven days, "did not pretend to write English," and though Hawthorne could enjoy the "ranting stuff" in his youth, literature takes little account of it. Farther south, amid the picturesque Berkshire hills of Massachusetts, once the scene of Jonathan Edwards's missionary labors among the Indians, Miss Sedgwick, a school-teacher, made a similar but more successful effort toward creating a native fiction, weaving her local surroundings and reminiscences into two-volume novels that had considerable vogue in their day. *A New England Tale* (1822), *Redwood* (1824), *Hope Leslie* (1827), and *The Linwoods* (1835), are at once sermons on the moral and domestic virtues, and faithful pictures of New England homestead life in the days when the Mohawk was still a menace to the white man's security.

Catharine Maria Sedgwick, 1789-1867.

A more important figure than either of the preceding was

James Kirke Paulding, 1779–1860.

James Kirke Paulding, who belonged to the region of the Dutch settlements about New York and who was himself probably a descendant of a Dutch family. A city politician and "man about town," he had a facile pen and spent much of its energy in satire of one kind or another, now growing witty or caustic over the relations between *John Bull and Brother Jonathan* (1812), now parodying Scott (*The Lay of the Scottish Fiddle*, 1813), and now burlesquing Cooper. His earliest work consisted of contributions to the *Salmagundi* papers (1807), in the publication of which he was associated with his friends, the Irving brothers, and of which he published a second series by himself (1819, 1820). His best work, however, is to be sought in his more serious pictures of American life and manners, and though his *Backwoodsman* (1818), a poem of three thousand lines, was not successful, such two-volume novels as *Koningsmarke, the Long Finne* (1823), *The Dutchman's Fireside* (1831), and *Westward Ho!* (1832) were. The first of these deals with the Swedish settlements on the Delaware, the second with the Dutch residents along the Hudson, and the third with life in Virginia and Kentucky. But to say that the novels were successful is not to give them high praise. Their crudity may be judged from a single sentence in *The Dutchman's Fireside*, in which the author, after picturing the overturning of a boat-load of picnickers in the middle of a stream, naïvely tries to soften the pain which he feels obliged to cause his readers: "It is with sorrowful emotions I record that the accident was fatal to two of the innocent girls and one of the young men, who sat in the bow of the boat." The characters are often caricatures, the humor is heavy, the pathos is overdrawn, and the author's constant preaching against the vices of an age of machinery and money-getting and extravagance is inappropriate and tedious. Yet the books are not wholly unreadable, and for their lively pictures of the Dutchman's fireside or the

red man's lodge they deserve a humble place by the works of Irving and Cooper.

John Pendleton Kennedy, 1795-1870.

To complete this brief survey of a fiction that at the beginning of the nineteenth century seemed to be exploiting the entire country almost as persistently as it is doing to-day, the name of John Pendleton Kennedy of Baltimore may be added. Kennedy, like Paulding, was a public man. He served several terms in Congress, and late in life was appointed, as Paulding had been before him, Secretary of the Navy. Nor were his writings unlike those of his northern contemporary. His earliest literary venture was the *Red Book* (1818), a society serial similar to *Salmagundi*, published in association with another Baltimorean. Later, he turned to fiction, and in 1832 published *Swallow Barn*, his best known work. Its plot is slight; it is valuable chiefly as a collection of sketches of manorial life in Virginia, of the easy-going days and ways at Swallow Barn, "an aristocratical old edifice that squats, like a brooding hen, on the southern bank of the James River." The style, in grace and genial humor, reminds one of Irving, to whom the book was dedicated. In his other works, *Horse-Shoe Robinson, a Tale of the Tory Ascendency* (1835), and *Rob of the Bowl* (1838), the author went back to revolutionary and colonial times, still laying the scenes in the South. It has sometimes been said that Kennedy wrote the fourth chapter of the second volume of Thackeray's *Virginians*, but it seems more probable that he only furnished Thackeray with some material of a local character which Thackeray's knowledge did not enable him to supply himself.

Such are a few of the books that from 1815 onward were published and advertised by the side of Irving's and Cooper's. But the years have covered them with increasing neglect, and we must turn to the works of the latter writers for the only permanent record of the romantic tendencies of the generation before Poe and Hawthorne.

WASHINGTON IRVING, 1783-1859

It seems eminently fitting that Irving, the oft-styled Father of American Letters,"—a very human, genial father, too, like old Chaucer himself,—should have borne the name of him who, by a clearer title, was called the "Father of his Country." He was born at New York in 1783, the year of the treaty of peace. "Washington's work is ended," said his mother; "the child shall be named after him." And the child received at a later day the great man's blessing and lived to be his biographer.

New York had then fewer than thirty thousand inhabitants and was still second to Philadelphia. It was comparatively easy for the city boy to get into the country and thus to see all sides of American life—commerce and agriculture, art and nature, society and solitude. Irving himself has told us of delightful holiday afternoon rambles, and of long excursions up the Hudson, squirrel-shooting and angling in the Sleepy Hollow region or drifting lazily past the Catskills. The love of the open air and of the picturesque always clung to him, and in one of his essays on England he declares that fondness for rural life has had a most healthful effect upon the English national character. Still he was essentially a city boy, with a city boy's tastes and habits. He lounged about the pier-heads, or snatched eagerly at chances to attend the theatre. If he was fond of visiting the scenes of murders and robberies, we must attribute it in part to his surroundings and in part to his active imagination; there could have been no morbid or depraved instinct back of it, for with all his mischievousness he had a noble and gentle disposition.

Traits.

In the large family of eleven children, of whom he was the youngest, his social nature was fully developed, and as he grew up he took more and more delight in social intercourse. He entered a law office, but its regular routine had few charms for

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

WASHINGTON IRVING

him. Instead of reading law he read literature, and he was glad at all times to escape to the clubs, the theatres, and the drawing-rooms, where his observations furnished him matter for the exercise of his pen in social sketches and satirical squibs to be printed in his brother Peter's morning newspaper. This very unacademic education received a proper finishing touch when, in 1804, his brothers sent him to Europe.

Thereby was revealed another marked trait. He went to Europe in the first instance for his health, and he went again later, he tells us, to see great men, though that is half a humorous fling at European contempt of America. But it is clear that a chief attraction was always the charm of Europe's "storied and poetical association." The romantic spirit was strong in him and it early took the form of a love of mediæval history and tradition. "My native country was full of youthful promise: Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age." And even as he sailed up the river Mersey, he was thrilled by catching sight, through a telescope, of "the mouldering ruin of an abbey overrun with ivy."

Early Writings.

His first sojourn in Europe lasted nearly two years. He returned to brighten the society of New York with his many personal charms, to which were now added health and the polish of travel. For a year he was associated with his eldest brother, William, and William's brother-in-law, James Kirke Paulding, in the publication of a semi-monthly periodical, *Salmagundi*, modelled, as such literary enterprises were wont to be, after the *Spectator*. He seemed to be aware by this time of his propensity toward writing, but as literature was not a promising profession for an American, he persisted, half-heartedly, in looking toward the law and politics. However, he was soon engaged in another literary enterprise. With his brother Peter he had planned to write a burlesque history of New York as a parody upon Dr. Samuel Mitchill's pedantic

Picture of New York, just then published, when Peter was suddenly called to Europe and the work was left in the hands of Washington. He changed the scope of it at once, condensing the parody into five introductory chapters and continuing the work as a chronicle, truthful in outline but still burlesque in spirit, of the settlement of New York by the Dutch, and of the reigns of the early Dutch governors. The work purported to have been written by an eccentric Dutch antiquary, and after some hoaxing notices in the newspaper of the mysterious disappearance of the author and the discovery of his manuscript, it was published in December, 1809, as *A History of New York*, by Diedrich Knickerbocker.

No one could have been more surprised than Irving at the success of this "haphazard production"—a success which was both immediate and lasting. His modesty was quite overwhelmed with the attentions he received. He had furnished readers with an inexhaustible fund of wonder and amusement, he had given America a genuine American book, he had shown New York that she had a history and traditions, and he had fixed a character and a name upon a quaint but worthy and influential element of New World society. True, all this was not done without offence. Some of the more prosaic of his readers of Dutch descent could not enter at once into the humor of the thing, and were disposed to resentment. But they were defenceless, and moreover Irving had written so wholly without malice that the feeling speedily wore away. The Dutch families became actually proud to acknowledge themselves Knickerbockers. Irving has a good-natured allusion to this in the preface to "Rip Van Winkle," wherein he says that the good Diedrich was "apt to ride his hobby his own way, and though it did now and then kick up the dust a little in the eyes of his neighbors, yet his errors and follies are remembered 'more in sorrow than in anger.'" Indeed, he declared, it was beginning to seem that Diedrich had some chance for immor-

"Knickerbocker History."

tality, inasmuch as certain biscuit-makers were imprinting his likeness on their New-Year cakes.

In that same preface, Irving says whimsically of the literary character of the *Knickerbocker History* that it is "not a whit better than it should be," adding with mock gravity that "its chief merit is its scrupulous accuracy, and it is now admitted into all historical collections as a book of unquestionable authority." Of course, the humor of the book is its first great quality—a humor of almost epic proportions, extending from mere quips and puns and trivial colloquialisms, such as "jumping out of one's skin" and "keeping up the raw," to the entire conception of the "Dutch dynasty" as a momentous era in the world's history, with its wars, its councils, its successions, its downfall and extinction. We read here of how the benevolent inhabitants of Europe introduced among the savages rum, gin, brandy, and the other comforts of life, of how the town of New Amsterdam arose out of mud, of the direful feud between Ten Breeches and Tough Breeches, of the Pipe Plot, of the Mosquito War, of the renowned Wouter van Twiller, who was exactly five feet six inches in height and six feet five inches in circumference, of his unparalleled virtues and literally unutterable wisdom, of how he fell into a profound doubt and finally evaporated, of how William the Testy grew tough in proportion as he dried, and of the dignified retirement and mortal surrender of Peter the Headstrong. The humor is of the hearty, reckless kind that sometimes oversteps the line of good taste, though that particular phase of it did not seem to give any offence to contemporary readers. Walter Scott discovered the book and relates how he spent several evenings reading it aloud until he and his guests were "sore with laughter." He did it the high honor of comparing it with the works of Dean Swift and of Laurence Sterne.

But there is another side to the merit of the book, and one

which later in life Irving felt moved to insist upon. He would have the book read, not merely as humor, but as in some sense poetry, that is to say, as a work of the romantic and creative imagination. He had intended, in this amusing form, he said, to embody the traditions and customs of his native city, "to clothe home scenes and places and familiar names with those imaginative and whimsical associations so seldom met with in our new country, but which live like charms and spells about the cities of the old world, binding the heart of the native inhabitant to his home." How well he succeeded was attested by the swarm of investigators who followed him and, as he expressed it, almost crowded him off the legendary ground he had been the first to explore. But no investigator can rob us of this legendary and now enchanted field. It was Irving's triumph that he re-created this past and yet left it, to the imagination, even more remotely past than ever, a fairy realm of antiquity safe from the desecration of the mere historian. The smoke of the burghers' pipes hangs like a haze over the picture, softening, yet leaving plainly discernible all the essential features,— the luxuriant cabbage-gardens, the brick-gabled houses, the women's quilted calico caps and short, spreading petticoats, the men's brass buttons and eel-skin queues.

"Ah, blissful and never-to-be-forgotten age! when everything was better than it has ever been since, or ever will be again, when Buttermilk Channel was quite dry at low water, when the shad in the Hudson were all salmon, . . . when as yet New Amsterdam was a mere pastoral town, shrouded in groves of sycamores and willows, and surrounded by trackless forests and wide-spreading waters, that seemed to shut out all the cares and vanities of a wicked world."

Years Abroad.

Notwithstanding the success of the *Knickerbocker History*, Irving did not yet decide for a literary career. The book, like many another masterpiece of humor, had been written or at least finished, in the midst of profound personal grief. Matilda Hoffman, a

girl of seventeen, to whom Irving was deeply attached, had suddenly died. The shock was one from which he recovered but slowly, perhaps never entirely; at any rate, partly owing to this and partly to other considerations, he remained throughout life unmarried. In 1815 he went again to Europe, for a short visit, in the interests of his brothers' hardware and cutlery business, in which he was a rather inactive partner. The visit, as it chanced, lasted seventeen years. The first five years of this period were spent in England. The mercantile enterprise failed, and Irving was once more adrift. Scott would have assisted him to an editorship, but the old vagabond literary instincts were asserting themselves too strongly again to allow him to look with favor upon routine journalism. Clearly, it was to be literature at last, but literature and freedom, not literature and drudgery and time-serving.

He had been for some time revolving the plan of a volume of literary essays on divers subjects. Now, feeling the need of prompt publication, he sent off such papers as he had completed to America, where they were printed, and published simultaneously at New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, as the *Sketch-Book*, written by "Geoffrey Crayon, Gent." This was in May, 1819. The first number contained the first five numbers of the work as we now have it, "Rip Van Winkle" being the most conspicuous. Other numbers followed, the sixth containing "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," and the seventh (1820) closing the series. The whole was then published at London in two volumes, with Scott once more in the rôle of good angel. The early numbers had already attracted attention in England, and naturally enough; for to a charm of personality and a finish of style scarcely excelled by the best English prose writers, they added a freshness of spirit, and occasionally of theme, that was quite un-English. Jeffrey, of the *Edinburgh Review*, who could have had no possible prejudice in favor of the book, gave

"Sketch-Book."

it a cordial welcome,—most cordial for Jeffrey. The gracious tone of the essays was well calculated to disarm criticism, the humor of several sketches was irresistible, and if the pathos of others was drawn in rather heavy lines, so much the better, for the age was sentimental. American literature was no longer a promise, but a fact.

Irving took his success modestly—was even alarmed by it and feared that it could not last. But with the praises of Scott, Byron, and Moore, and the encouragement of his publishers he could scarcely doubt long. At any rate he kept on, and in the intervals of travel on the continent he completed two more volumes—*Bracebridge Hall* in 1822, and *Tales of a Traveller* in 1824. They contained many excellent things, some, like "The Stout Gentleman" and "Dolph Heyliger," that have become fairly classic, but they were scarcely different enough from the *Sketch-Book* in either form or treatment to add anything to the author's reputation. In 1826 he went to Spain, drawn thither by the old magic of romantic associations, and settled down to work of an historical nature. The chief results were the *The Life and Voyages of Columbus* (1828), the *Conquest of Granada* (1829), and the *Alhambra* (1832).

Irving's historical works must not be judged by the tests we apply to-day. He had not scholarship in the modern sense, nor the philosophic mind, though neither was he seriously deficient in these qualities. His defect was really an excess—an excess of imagination and sympathy. He considered it the duty of a historian to be charitable, and he was prone to magnify the deeds and the virtues of his heroes. Thus the *Columbus* is more delightful than trustworthy; but it was so much better than anything before it that its author shared with Hallam the honor of a gold medal from the British Royal Society of Literature, and the book long and deservedly remained a standard biography. The *Conquest of Granada*, too, is an excellent work of its kind, and reads like a romance, which, in fact, it partly is.

In the *Alhambra*, however, Irving once more escaped sufficiently from the thraldom of facts to be quite at home, and in this work he repeated the success of the *Knickerbocker* and the *Sketch-Book*. Prescott, indeed, called it the Spanish Sketch-Book, and the Spanish themselves have always regarded it as a kind of prose-poem. It is a happy mixture of fact and fancy, of history and legend, in which the old Moorish palace and fortress is removed as by a rod of enchantment from the material world and set in the realm of the imagination, secure against decay. Moreover, in this book, Irving has done a peculiar service to Spain. For while he has taken great pains to be accurate, correcting certain fanciful conceptions of the country and portraying it for the stern, rugged, and even barren land that it is, he has yet enveloped it more inseparably than ever with the atmosphere of romance. Travel in Spain to one who has read Irving must be a very different thing from what it is to one who has not. It is just such a poet's service as Scott did for the Highlands of Scotland or Byron for the Isles of Greece.

"*Alhambra.*"

"I tread haunted ground, and am surrounded by romantic associations. From earliest boyhood, when, on the banks of the Hudson, I first pored over the pages of an old Spanish story about the wars of Granada, that city has ever been a subject of my waking dreams; and often have I trod in fancy the romantic halls of the Alhambra. Behold for once a day-dream realized; yet I can scarcely credit my senses, or believe that I do indeed inhabit the palace of Boabdil, and look down from its balconies upon chivalric Granada. As I loiter through the Oriental chambers, and hear the murmuring of fountains and the song of the nightingale; as I inhale the odor of the rose, and feel the influence of the balmy climate, I am almost tempted to fancy myself in the Paradise of Mahomet, and that the plump little Dolores is one of the bright-eyed Houris, destined to administer to the happiness of true believers.

. . . . . .

"The peculiar charm of this old dreamy palace is its power of calling up vague reveries and picturings of the past, and thus cloth-

ing naked realities with the illusions of the memory and the imagination. As I delight to walk in these 'vain shadows,' I am prone to seek those parts of the Alhambra which are most favorable to this phantasmagoria of the mind; and none are more so than the Court of Lions, and its surrounding halls. Here the hand of time has fallen the lightest, and the traces of Moorish elegance and splendor exist in almost their original brilliancy. Earthquakes have shaken the foundations of this pile, and rent its rudest towers; yet see! not one of those slender columns has been displaced, not an arch of that light and fragile colonnade has given way, and all the fairy fretwork of these domes, apparently as unsubstantial as the crystal fabrics of a morning's frost, yet exist after the lapse of centuries, almost as fresh as if from the hand of the Moslem artist. I write in the midst of these mementos of the past, in the fresh hour of early morning, in the fated Hall of the Abencerrages. The blood-stained fountain, the legendary monument of their massacre, is before me; the lofty jet almost casts its dew upon my paper. How difficult to reconcile the ancient tale of violence and blood with the gentle and peaceful scene around! Everything here appears calculated to inspire kind and happy feelings, for everything is delicate and beautiful. The very light falls tenderly from above, through the lantern of a dome tinted and wrought as if by fairy hands. Through the ample and fretted arch of the portal I behold the Court of Lions, with brilliant sunshine gleaming along its colonnades and sparkling in its fountains. The lively swallow dives into the court, and then surging upwards, darts away twittering over the roofs; the busy bee toils humming among the flower-beds; and painted butterflies hover from plant to plant, and flutter up and sport with each other in the sunny air. It needs but a slight exertion of the fancy to picture some pensive beauty of the harem, loitering in these secluded haunts of Oriental luxury.

"He, however, who would behold this scene under an aspect more in unison with its fortunes, let him come when the shadows of evening temper the brightness of the court, and throw a gloom into the surrounding halls. Then nothing can be more serenely melancholy, or more in harmony with the tale of departed grandeur.

"At such times I am apt to seek the Hall of Justice, whose deep shadowy arcades extend across the upper end of the court. Here were performed, in presence of Ferdinand and Isabella and their triumphant court, the pompous ceremonies of high mass, on taking possession of the Alhambra. The very cross is still to be seen upon the wall, where the altar was erected, and where officiated the Grand

Cardinal of Spain, and others of the highest religious dignitaries of the land. I picture to myself the scene when this place was filled with the conquering host, that mixture of mitred prelate, and shorn monk, and steel-clad knight, and silken courtier; when crosses and crosiers and religious standards were mingled with proud armorial ensigns and the banners of the haughty chiefs of Spain, and flaunted in triumph through these Moslem halls. I picture to myself Columbus, the future discoverer of a world, taking his modest stand in a remote corner, the humble and neglected spectator of the pageant. I see in imagination the Catholic sovereigns prostrating themselves before the altar, and pouring forth thanks for their victory; while the vaults resound with sacred minstrelsy, and the deep-toned Te Deum.

"The transient illusion is over—the pageant melts from the fancy—monarch, priest, and warrior return into oblivion with the poor Moslems over whom they exulted. The hall of their triumph is waste and desolate. The bat flits about its twilight vault, and the owl hoots from the neighboring tower of Comares."

Irving had now produced three works, each of a high order in its kind—one of humor, one of description and sentiment, and one of romance. He was to write nothing greater than these, though many years of literary activity remained to him. Between 1829 and 1831 he was in London again, as Secretary of Legation to the Court of St. James. In 1832 he was able to carry out the design he had for some time been cherishing of returning to America. Edward Everett, who reviewed the *Alhambra* for the *North American Review* of that year, took the occasion to congratulate both Irving and America, declaring that Irving, by identifying his future fortunes with the United States, best consulted both his happiness and his permanent literary fame. There had been some foolish criticism of the author for remaining so long abroad and writing on foreign themes. But one of his temperament could not be blamed for finding in Old World society much that he really needed and could not get in the New. Besides, though the bulk of his *Sketch-Book* had a British inspiration, the best

Return to America.

things in it were wholly American; and what more fitting theme could an American in Spain have chosen than the life of Columbus? Irving was loyal at heart, and the good sense of his countrymen knew it, and they applauded him to the echo when, at a public banquet at New York in his honor, he closed his speech with the declaration that he should remain here as long as he lived.

Later Works.

Now in his fiftieth year and passing the prime of life, he was desirous of settling down in a home of his own. First, however, for the roving instinct was not yet dead, he wanted to see with his own eyes something of the country that had grown so in his absence, and he embarked on a tour that took him through the forests and Indian mounds of Ohio west to the buffalo ranges of the upper Arkansas and south to New Orleans. Then he secured a picturesque spot at Tarrytown on the Hudson, not far from Sleepy Hollow, and began to remodel an old stone cottage into a "snug little Dutch nookery," which grew in time to the well-known Sunnyside, his home for the remainder of his life. Once he yielded to political pressure and accepted the post of Minister to Spain, spending the four years from 1842 to 1846 at Madrid. Apart from this, he passed his time almost exclusively in literary work. *A Tour on the Prairies* appeared in 1835 as a part of *The Crayon Miscellany*, *Astoria* in 1836, *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville* in 1837, *Oliver Goldsmith* and *Mahomet and His Successors* in 1849, *Wolfert's Roost* in 1855, and *Life of Washington* in 1855–1859. He had, it seems, even from boyhood, cherished the plan of writing a history of the conquest of Mexico, but when he learned that Prescott desired to undertake such a work, he magnanimously abandoned the field to him. *Astoria* was a semi-historical compilation, prepared in collaboration with his nephew, to celebrate the commercial enterprise of John Jacob Astor in establishing a colony at the mouth of the Columbia River. The biography of Goldsmith was a

work which he was well qualified to write, for in temperament, in tastes, and in clearness and charm of literary style, he had much in common with the author of the *Citizen of the World* and the *Vicar of Wakefield*. The *Life of Washington*, the life of the pioneer of freedom in America, was a most fitting task to crown the labors of the pioneer of American literature, who had told also the life-story of him who discovered the New World to the Old.

Toward the close of the year which saw the publication of the fifth and final volume of the last named work, on November 28, 1859, Irving died at his home on the Hudson. He was buried on a hill overlooking the river and a portion of the Sleepy Hollow valley.

Summary and Estimate.

It is not at once easy to say which is the strongest among Irving's several titles to our praise. It has sometimes been the fashion to regard the *Knickerbocker History* as his best work, and it is easy to understand the temptations which have led to such a judgment. The book was wholly American in its inspiration, it was written with manifest spontaneity and an almost reckless gaiety, its plan is highly original, its humor genuine and all-pervading, and it has a largeness of scope and wholeness of texture that were not always found in his writings. The fact remains, however, that the majority of his readers have taken the *Sketch-Book* most closely to heart, and perhaps they are right. The latter book is admittedly wanting in unity, but it makes up for that in variety; and while the stories of Rip Van Winkle, Ichabod Crane, and the Christmas Dinner may seem but trifles in extent, they are not trifles when measured by the standards of literary art. Nor does it matter greatly that the whole series is in some sense the *Spectator* revived: the masters of English prose have never been so many as to make such revivals unwelcome.

We may readily grant, indeed, that Irving's greatness did

not lie in originality. He was not so well fitted to create a tradition as to perpetuate one or give it a new direction. There was nothing revolutionary in his make-up; literature was good enough as he found it, and he preserved to the end a conservative, almost aristocratic ideal of its office. It is well, too, that he did so, since it was to be his task to force from English readers the first reluctant approval. Largely because he was not revolutionary, he was admitted at once to their favor; his homely, sentimental, or mediæval themes were entirely safe ones; and his style, formed upon familiar British models, found its audience prepared. At the same time, the American atmosphere lurked about it all, and so, almost imperceptibly, he bridged the gulf between the two nations and linked our literature to theirs. That this service was a great one is unquestionable.

Of the sentimentalism which pervades so much of his work, little need be said in apology. Its influence has sometimes been bad; young admirers of Irving and his weak imitators have very often fallen into a style of effusive tenderness and namby-pamby moralizing that is anything but agreeable. But for the man who would seek out the tomb of Petrarch's Laura, and grieve over the downfall of Napoleon, it seems only a natural and inoffensive self-expression. Irving is saved, indeed, from mawkishness, by his underlying manliness and sincerity and his fund of humor. The blend of sentiment and humor which made a perfect tale of the "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" was a blend native to the man. And after all, there is far more health than morbidness in his sentiment. It is impossible to read even those passages of the *Sketch-Book* which describe his voyage across the ocean in search of health, without catching the infection of his energy and buoyant spirits. What a good thing it is to be alive, he seems to say—what a busy, brilliant, bounteous world it is! Such a personality as this was sure to make its

way in the world of men, and, with the gift of a style as lucid and winning as itself, no less in the world of letters.

Further characterization of his writings seems almost idle. They are very easily classified, since they require no profound study, offer no puzzles, and excite no hostility. Everybody reads them and likes them, and there the matter ends. They are works of the heart rather than of the head—gentle, human books, that belong on the same shelf with the writings of Addison and Goldsmith. If we desire to satisfy the hunger of the intellect, to be thrilled with a new hope, or to get solace for a lost faith, we do not go to Irving. He has little food and few stimulants, and no medicines save such as the wisest doctors always prescribe—fresh air and sunshine and a cheerful spirit. He is an entertainer for the idle hour, not a companion of the unsatisfied years. Yet, without being either a poet or a scholar, he goes so directly to all that is best in human nature that he wins for his admirers both poets and scholars, and at the same time that great audience of the uncritical that poets and scholars cannot always win.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER, 1789-1851

In James Fenimore Cooper we have once more a romancer who approaches the novelist type, inviting comparison with Brockden Brown and his tardy successors. But Cooper stands out from the group of pioneer novelists in strong relief as the one man who, to a thorough knowledge of primitive conditions on the frontier, added both a quick discernment of their romantic elements and the artist's power of broad and serious imaginative treatment. He lacked Brown's subtlety of mental analysis, but he was in every way saner and wholesomer, with a stronger grasp upon the realities of life. Whatever he did was done in a large, free way; and Brown's Philadelphia scenes, Miss Sedgwick's pictures of New England home and school life, and the Dutch interiors of Paulding, pale before the sweeps of forest and ocean that fill the background of Cooper's canvas.

This eminently befits the man whose father believed himself to have settled more acres than any other man in America, and who spent the first thirty-one years of his own life mostly out of doors, in unconscious preparation for the writing of the thirty-one years to follow. He was born at Burlington, New Jersey, September 15, 1789, the eleventh of twelve children. He was christened simply James,—Fenimore, the name of his mother, who was of Swedish descent, not being assumed until 1826. When he was but fourteen months old, his father, who had come into possession of large tracts of land about the head-waters of the Susquehanna in central New York, moved thither with his entire household. There, on the southeastern shore of Otsego Lake, had already been founded Cooperstown, and there, within a few years, was erected the large, baronial-like family mansion, Otsego Hall—America's Abbotsford, it has sometimes been called—the home of Cooper's youth and of his later manhood. It was the advance of civilization upon the wilderness. The charm of the region, to this day remarkably picturesque, made a deep impression on the growing boy. The "beauteous valley" in the uplands, the lake that "lay imbedded in mountains of evergreen, with the long shadows of the pines on its surface," the "dark ribbon of water that gushed from the lake's outlet and wound its way toward the distant Chesapeake," are all faithfully and lovingly described in the opening chapters of *The Pioneers*—a story in which it is easy to substitute for Judge Marmaduke Temple of Templeton the name of Judge William Cooper of Cooperstown. In the settlement itself was a motley population—traders, trappers, and woodcutters—gathered from all quarters of the globe; while to the north and west stretched the seemingly interminable forests of beech and maple, oak and pine, with their denizens of the wild deer, wolf, bear, and panther, and the scarcely less wild Indian.

Youth.

Cooper's schooling began at the village "Academy," was continued in the family of an English rector at Albany, and was concluded, though not completed, with three years at Yale. He entered Yale at the age of thirteen, but as he distinguished himself throughout his course more for mischief than for scholarship, he was dismissed without being allowed to graduate. He was thus left, like most of the writers of the central and southern states, without the rigorous college training that fell, with the single exception of Whittier, to the lot of the New Englanders. But the young Cooper had little thought of becoming a professional man, and probably took his dismissal from Yale with a light heart, the more so as it resulted in securing for him an education better suited to his temperament. His father, who, as a Congressional representative and public man, would have some political influence, decided that he should fit himself for the navy, and, as a preliminary, the youth of seventeen shipped before the mast of a merchant vessel in the autumn of 1806. The year's voyage, which, fortunately in this case, was exceptionally stormy, took him from New York to London, thence to Gibraltar, and by way again of London, back to Philadelphia. His commission as midshipman in the navy promptly followed. He served for three years, occupied part of the time in building a brig on Lake Ontario, and part of the time in charge of the gunboats on Lake Champlain. After his marriage in 1811, he resigned his commission, and settled down to a happy domestic life, residing alternately near his old home in Otsego County, and near the home of his wife's parents in Westchester County. He was engaged in the somewhat aimless occupations of a gentleman farmer, with no thought of duties or interests extending beyond his own household. But suddenly, after nine years of sheep-shearing and tree-planting, by what seems the merest freak of fancy he found himself launched on a literary career.

It must have been in 1819 or 1820. He had been reading

an English society novel, and as he laid it aside he declared in disgust: "I could write a better story myself." He was challenged to do it, and the matter passed from jest to earnest. *Precaution: a Novel* (it was the custom then to flaunt the moral of a story in its title) was published in the fall of 1820. It was a conventional story of English society, and readers were allowed to believe that the author was an Englishman. But it found few readers. That it should have found any only proves that there is always an indiscriminate public ready to read anything called a novel. There was no inspiration behind the work. What Cooper knew of England was confined to what he had been able to pick up while on shore leave in sailor rig at London; and what he knew of English "high life" must have been all learned from books, probably from the novels whose peculiar merits he was trying to excel. But *Precaution* was only a beginning. His friends complained of his having gone abroad for a theme; he owed something to America. Somewhat doggedly he set to work again, turning to the American Revolution for a plot and choosing for the scene the "neutral ground" of Westchester County, where he was then living. But he had little faith that his countrymen could be made to take interest in a story of scenes so familiar to them. The first volume of *The Spy* was printed before the second was begun; and to set at rest the fears of the printer in regard to its length, the last chapter of the second volume was written, printed, and paged before the intervening chapters were written. It appeared late in 1821 and its success was as immediate as it was unexpected. There were three editions and a dramatization within three months. It was republished in England with equal success, and was promptly translated into French.

First Stories.

Cooper was roused to a consciousness of his powers. He had discovered that writing is a trick not necessarily learned at schools; he had discovered, too, something of the wealth of

his own imagination, and of the joys of creation. He turned with lively affection to his other home, the region about Otsego Lake, feeling that it would be an easy and pleasant task to invest it likewise with a romantic interest. The result was *The Pioneers*, published early in 1823, the one of all his books into which he put most of his heart. He wrote it, he declared, to please himself; but it pleased the public, too, and so well that there could be henceforth no question of his fame or calling. One more field immediately allured him with its romantic possibilities—the sea, which he had known so well in his youth, and which still called to him with its old charm as he looked out from the Westchester hills across the waves of Long Island Sound. He wrote and published *The Pilot* in the same year.

Later Years.

From this time on there was no pause. Year after year he turned, in the exercise of his imagination, from history and tradition to the wilderness, and from the wilderness to the sea, until, just the year before his death, he published the last of the thirty-two tales that bear his name. It is impossible to contemplate this result without surprise. Cooper was hardly the man one would have expected to find in the field of letters. He would have made an excellent colonizer or general. But he wielded the pen as, in other circumstances, he would have wielded the sword or driven the plow, indefatigably and fearlessly. His literary industry was probably unequalled by any man of his time on this side of the Atlantic. In addition to his romances, which he produced at the rate of rather more than one a year (*The Last of the Mohicans* was planned and written in four months), he found time to write various reviews and articles, of a political or historical nature, and notably his *History of the United States Navy* (1839). Besides this, he attended faithfully to his social and business duties. He paid off debts; he founded a club in New York City, and kept it alive; he travelled in Europe and studied with keen interest social and political conditions

there, publishing notes of his travel; he engaged in numerous controversies, and when they led him into libel suits, as they frequently did, he argued his own cause.

The story of Cooper's controversies is not a pleasant one to read, and it might well be omitted if it were not so intimately connected with his personality and the character of many of his later works. To begin with, all the traits of his disposition, whether good or bad, were strongly marked. His character can be read very plainly in his portrait. He was upright, straightforward, patriotic, fearless, combative, and proud. He held just as tenaciously to unreasonable views as to reasonable ones. He was generally reasonable in matters of right, but unreasonable in matters of expediency. He scorned compromises. He could not wear honesty with grace nor temper justice with amiability. A greater man would have been content merely to be in the right; Cooper could not rest until he had proved his right to others. The result was years of strife and bitterness and barren victories; for even to win his cause at law was to lose it in the hearts of the people. In 1826 he went to Europe and spent seven years at the various capitals. There were good reasons why he should find life there congenial. He had no hatred of the English; his wife had come of a Tory family, and he had always been tolerant toward the attitude of the Tories in the Revolution, as may be seen from the tale of *The Spy*. Besides, the English read and praised his books. Indeed, wherever he might go in Europe, he had the gratification of seeing translations of his books displayed in the book-shops. Nevertheless, the European contempt for most things American, and the false ideas of American affairs which he found everywhere current, were things he could not abide. He spoke out boldly in defence of his country in conversation, at public dinners, in printed articles, and in letters. He even wrote romances embodying his views. *The Red Rover* and *The Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*, for example, contain

some very plain satire on foreign arrogance ("a certain condescension" Lowell called it forty years later); and *The Bravo* and *The Headsman* were written to glorify republican ways and institutions. His literary work suffered, and his ends were not gained.

He came back to America in 1833, only to find that his own countrymen did not appreciate his loyalty. Apparently they had no desire for a defender who persisted in "flaunting his Americanism through Europe" and redoubling the ridicule he sought to allay. He turned upon the Americans, reviling their provincialism, their greed, their vulgarity, in the very terms in which he had heard these things reviled in Europe. He published more and worse romances—*The Monikins*, *Homeward Bound*, *Home as Found*,—"six volumes," said Lowell, "to show he's as good as a lord." "I think," wrote a friend, "you lose hold on the American public by rubbing down their shins with brickbats as you do." Of course he lost hold. At Cooperstown, where he made his home after his return from Europe, he got into an unfortunate controversy with his fellow-townsmen over the possession of a piece of land. It led to a long train of libel suits. Libel suits also followed the publication of his Naval History, which was characteristically outspoken in its judgments of many prominent men and events. But with every case he won, and he won almost all, he lost still more of his popularity.

Naturally he grew embittered. Especially did he grieve over the attacks made upon him for his Naval History, in which he had tried to tell the simple truth as he saw it, without bias or partisanship. He took some consolation, however, from the thought that his children could, in the future, "point to the facts, with just pride that they had a father who dared to stem popular prejudice in order to write truth." He found refuge in his home, and in the exercise of his art, for his literary fertility seemed to increase with his years and in spite of

numerous distractions. Seventeen of his tales, a little more than half of the entire number, were written between 1840 and 1850. Ten of these belong to the years 1840-1845, including at least four of high rank, *The Pathfinder*, *The Deerslayer*, *The Two Admirals*, and *Wing-and-Wing*. But he never quite forgave the public, and it was one of his last injunctions to his family that no one should be authorized to write his biography. He died in 1851, on the eve of his sixty-second birthday. A few months later a public gathering in his memory was held in New York City, at which Webster presided and Bryant delivered the memorial address.

"*The Spy.*"

In reviewing Cooper's literary product, it will be well to fix attention upon the surviving portion only, dismissing at once all those books which grew out of temporary passions or personal prejudices and which have fallen into the oblivion they deserve. First, then, to follow a division already indicated, there are the romances drawn more or less directly from history. They are of very different degrees of merit. *Lionel Lincoln*, which ventured upon New England soil (it has stirring accounts of the fights at Concord and Bunker Hill) was a relative failure. So, likewise, was *Mercedes of Castile*, which has some interest, however, in that it weaves a romance about the first voyage of Columbus. Better are *Afloat and Ashore* and *Satanstoe*, tales of old colonial life in New York. But *The Spy*, which made Cooper's fame at home and which carried it farther abroad than Irving's was ever carried, remains still one of his most widely read books. Moreover, it retained for three-quarters of a century the distinction of being the one highly successful romance constructed out of incidents in the war of the Revolution.* It derives its chief interest from its central character, Harvey Birch, the Spy of the Neutral Ground, a humble

*Kennedy's *Horse-Shoe Robinson*, Simms's *Partisan*, Thompson's *Green Mountain Boys*, and Theodore Winthrop's *Edwin Brothertoft* hold a much inferior place. Hawthorne's *Septimius Felton* was left unfinished.

peddler and patriot, who risks life and honor in a condemned office, suspected even by his countrymen, and who goes down to his grave with no other exoneration or reward than the written, but unrevealed, testimony of Washington to the loyalty of his deeds. Few heroes of fiction have been more admired. A military officer in Salvador was known to speak of "Señor Birch" as a "model guerrillero," and a French agent of the secret service under Louis Philippe imitated his virtues.

Leather-Stocking Tales.

The second important division of Cooper's works consists of the stories of the frontier, especially the five Leather-Stocking Tales. These latter get their unity and much of their interest from a singular character, Natty Bumppo, who appears in them all under various names—Leather Stocking, Hawkeye, Deerslayer, Pathfinder, La Longue Carabine. He is the pioneer of the woods; the friend of the Mohicans, Chingachgook and Uncas, though himself a white man "without a cross"; the scout, hunter, trapper, and philosopher, who is always ready to judge men as he would judge animals, according to their several "gifts." In *The Pioneers* (1823), the first of the stories of the wilderness, he is portrayed in somewhat rude outlines—an old man in the background of the tale, living with his still more aged friend, Chingachgook, now christianized into Indian John. Cooper could have had no thought, when writing this book, of using the character a second time. But the portrait took his fancy, and when, in 1826, he came to write *The Last of the Mohicans*, he introduced Leather-Stocking again, this time in the prime of his life, taking, with Chingachgook and Uncas, an active part in the French and Indian War. Here he appears in the dignity of mature manhood, with an Indian's cunning, courage, and fortitude, and a white man's finer sense of honor. In *The Prairie*, which followed in 1827, are depicted the closing scenes of his life, wherein, pushed by civilization far out upon the Western plains, his mind at the last moment

wanders pathetically back to his home among the Otsego hills. But Cooper was not yet satisfied. Two more chapters were added to the history of the scout. *The Pathfinder* (1840) gives us the romance of his middle life, by the shores of Lake Ontario; *The Deerslayer* (1841) shows him on his first war-path, by the Otsego. Those who would read the books in the order of events, should arrange them thus (as it happens, in alphabetical order): *Deerslayer*, *Last of the Mohicans*, *Pathfinder*, *Pioneers*, *Prairie*. It is impossible to say which is the best of the five. Most readers will prefer *The Last of the Mohicans* for the lively interest of its rapidly succeeding events, the narration of which is seldom checked by description or moralizing. Cooper himself regarded *The Pathfinder* and *The Deerslayer* as his best works. They certainly represent him at the maturity of his powers; and it was of the former that Balzac said: "It is beautiful, it is grand—I know of no one in the world, save Walter Scott, who has risen to that grandeur and serenity of colors." Yet *The Pioneers* and *The Prairie* have charms of their own, the former with its almost lyric descriptions of forest and lake, the latter with its strange, overpowering sense, found also in the pages of Chateaubriand and Bryant, of the vastness and majesty of nature as exhibited in the solitudes of the American continent. Together the five tales are a kind of prose epic of the settlement of the new world, of the conquest of man over nature. And the character that binds them into one, the frontiersman who bridges the gap between white man and red, is a rude type of the independence, energy, honesty, and toleration, that have made the United States one of the great nations of the earth.

Sea-Tales.

Of Cooper's tales dealing with the sea, the third natural division of his works, five are noteworthy—*The Pilot*, *The Red Rover*, *The Water-Witch*, *The Two Admirals*, and *Wing-and-Wing*. It is sufficient to say of these that by common consent they stand at the head of romances of

their kind. Smollett, in the eighteenth century, had drawn sailors to the life, but Cooper was virtually the creator of the sea-tale as a form of modern fiction. He wrote *The Pilot* just after the appearance of Scott's *The Pirate*, partly with the object of showing how such a theme would be treated by one who, unlike Scott, was personally familiar with life on the ocean, and who had not to "get up" his technical knowledge for the purpose. The difference will be immediately evident to any one who reads the opening chapters of *The Pilot*. But it is safe to say that whoever takes up those chapters for the first time will speedily forget any critical purpose he may have had. The gathering storm and darkness on the Northumberland coast, the wild anchorage in a strange roadstead, the mysterious pilot, and finally the slow working of the frigate out to sea in the teeth of the gale, arouse precisely those feelings of terror and admiration that it is one of the chief aims of romance to arouse. Cooper differs from other sea-romancers by making the reader feel that he is on shipboard, not as a passenger and spectator merely, but as one of the crew, with an exact knowledge of all the dangers that beset him from wind and tide and rock and shoal, and with a power to calculate to a nicety the reliance to be placed upon every force arrayed against those dangers, from spring of mast to draught of keel. It is the nearest substitute for actual experience that art can give. We can understand how the old seaman to whom Cooper read the opening chapters of *The Pilot* paced the floor in a frenzy of excitement. This story, also, be it said in passing, contains a character that has been much admired—Long Tom Coffin, the veteran whaler of Nantucket.

Achievement.

Cooper's service to America has already been indicated. Never in the recorded history of the world has pioneering been carried on upon the same great scale or under such picturesque circumstances as here in our own country. That the romance, or rather the epic, of this great civiliz-

ing movement should have been unwritten is a calamity the mind refuses to picture. And without Cooper's work it would have been pitifully crude and fragmentary. Imagine, for a comparison, the loss to Western Europe if Scott had not brought his genius to the reconstruction of her history and legend. And our loss would have been Europe's also. It is easy to understand why Europe seized upon Cooper's books with such eagerness. The tales suffered nothing by translation, for they depended not upon any merits of style but upon the story they had to tell. And it was just then a story of thrilling interest to Europeans, whose eyes were turned curiously upon the new world. Some odd results followed, for readers did not always stop to consider that they were getting only a partial view. Many Europeans thought that life in America meant nothing but clearing forests and fighting Indians, and in out-of-the-way corners the notion clings even yet. But Cooper should not be blamed. It is merely our misfortune that the other features of American life found no such adequate portrayal. If we had had our Dickens and our Thackeray as well as our Scott, the matter might have been different.

No more is Cooper morally responsible for the flood of yellow-backed literature that followed in his wake. He never panders to brutal or vicious appetites. His heroes never hunt or fight for pure love of sport, nor lose the occasion to administer a sharp reproof to one who does. Natty Bumppo is no "monster of goodness," but beneath his uncouth exterior are to be found most of the moral virtues. It is inconceivable that any boy could be fired, by reading his history, with a desire to go out and scalp Indians. Cooper's very idealization of the Indian character, which has been so much criticised, is strong evidence of his own faith in the high possibilities of humanity. Possibly the idealization was carried too far, though we are not so sure of that to-day. At the most, it must be remembered that it was so only in the case of one or

two characters. His Indians in general are inhuman, conscienceless savages, and he does not hesitate to make them perpetrate deeds so revolting that we hurry over the written passage without daring to look back. Le Renard Subtil is more than a complement for the noble Chingachgook and his ill-fated son, who stand out as marked exceptions, like the wise man among the wild beasts of Plato's *Republic*.

Defects.

Yet Cooper had many faults. In most points of literary art, in style, plot, and dramatic setting, he was distinctly inferior to Scott. Scott was himself no master of style; yet Cooper occasionally committed blunders that would have put the former to the blush. This was partly a result of ignorance, due to his ragged training, and partly a result of his indifference and his headlong habits of composition. We cannot but wish that some kindly adviser had been at his elbow while he wrote, to save him from some of his vices, — to make him, for example, substitute *man* or *person* for *individual*, and *woman* for his ever-offending (to modern taste, at least) *female*, or to hint that there is neither character-drawing nor humor in such distortions as Hurry Harry's *and-bush* for *ambush* or Leather Stocking's references to "judgmatical" actions and "my-hog-guinea" chairs. His plots suffer in much the same way. He was too little of an artist and too much of a moralist to be a perfect writer of tales. He was everywhere concerned for moral effect; and this, together with his lack of humor, led him into constructing absurd situations, thereby making it easy for a humorist like Mark Twain to poke fun at his entire method.* His warriors often harangue on the battlefield like Homer's. Natty Bumppo will give an Indian a lesson in behavior before he puts a bullet through his heart, sublimely indifferent to the fact that the Indian cannot understand, and that even if he could he might find the code of etiquette different in Indian-heaven. But more serious than all

*"Cooper's Literary Offences," *North American Review*, July, 1895.

this is Cooper's weakness in character-drawing—a weakness which sets him once more below Scott, and far below writers like Balzac and Thackeray. Of course we must remember that he was writing romances and not character novels; yet it is a pity that, aside from two or three fairly life-like creations, his characters, especially his women, are little better than puppets. They talk, but their talk is pedantic and labored. Their virtues and vices are hung on them like so much wearing apparel.

Greatness.

But while these things condemn Cooper, as a literary artist, to an inferior rank, they can not be held to condemn him utterly. Even his style is not so bad as it is sometimes painted: so long as he is writing narrative and not dialogue it is really remarkable for firmness and ease. Moreover, in his best work, his minor defects in this respect and others, are to a great extent obscured by his virtues—by the absorbing interest of his thrilling situations, by the commanding presence of his able-bodied and large-hearted heroes, and by the poetical glamour which, through his real genius for description, he has succeeded in throwing over nearly every scene. Let two pages, taken from the quietest part of *The Last of the Mohicans*, speak for some qualities of his art:

While Heyward and his companions hesitated to approach a building so decayed, Hawkeye and the Indians entered within the low walls, not only without fear, but with obvious interest. While the former surveyed the ruins, both internally and externally, with the curiosity of one whose recollections were reviving at each moment, Chingachgook related to his son, in the language of the Delawares, and with the pride of a conqueror, the brief history of the skirmish which had been fought in his youth in that secluded spot. A strain of melancholy, however, blended with his triumph, rendering his voice, as usual, soft and musical.

In the meantime the sisters gladly dismounted, and prepared to enjoy their halt in the coolness of the evening, and in a security which they believed nothing but the beasts of the forest could invade.

"Would not our resting place have been more retired, my worthy friend," demanded the more vigilant Duncan, perceiving that the scout had already finished his short survey, "had we chosen a spot less known and one more rarely visited than this?"

"Few live who know the block-house was ever raised," was the slow and musing answer; "'tis not often that books are made, and narratives written, of such a scrimmage as was here fou't atween the Mohicans and the Mohawks, in a war of their own waging. I was then a younker and went out with the Delawares, because I knew they were a scandalized and wronged race. Forty days and forty nights did the imps crave our blood around this pile of logs, which I designed and partly reared, being, as you'll remember, no Indian myself, but a man without a cross. The Delawares lent themselves to the work and we made it good, ten to twenty, until our numbers were nearly equal, and then we sallied out upon the hounds, and not a man of them ever got back to tell the fate of his party. Yes, yes; I was then young and new to the sight of blood; and not relishing the thought that creatures who had spirits like myself should lay on the naked ground, to be torn asunder by beasts or to bleach in the rains, I buried the dead with my own hands, under that very little hillock where you have placed yourselves; and no bad seat does it make, neither, though it be raised by the bones of mortal men."

Heyward and the sisters arose, on the instant, from the grassy sepulchre; nor could the two latter, notwithstanding the terrific scenes they had so recently passed through, entirely suppress an emotion of natural horror, when they found themselves in such familiar contact with the grave of the dead Mohawks. The gray light, the gloomy little area of dark grass, surrounded by its border of brush, beyond which the pines rose, in breathing silence, apparently, into the very clouds, and the deathlike stillness of the vast forest, were all in unison to deepen such a sensation.

"They are gone, and they are harmless," continued Hawkeye, waving his hand, with a melancholy smile, at their manifest alarm; "they'll never shout the war-whoop nor strike a blow with the tomahawk again! And of all those who aided in placing them where they lie, Chingachgook and I only are living! The brothers and family of the Mohican formed our war party; and you see before you all that are now left of his race."

The eyes of the listeners involuntarily sought the forms of the Indians, with a compassionate interest in their desolate fortune. Their dark persons were still to be seen within the shadows of the

block-house, the son listening to the relation of his father with that sort of intenseness which would be created by a narrative that redounded so much to the honor of those whose names he had long revered for their courage and savage virtues.

"I had thought the Delawares a pacific people," said Duncan, "and that they never waged war in person; trusting the defence of their lands to those very Mohawks that you slew!"

"'Tis true in part," returned the scout, "and yet, at the bottom, 'tis a wicked lie. Such a treaty was made in ages gone by, through the deviltries of the Dutchers, who wished to disarm the natives that had the best right to the country, where they had settled themselves. The Mohicans, though a part of the same nation, having to deal with the English, never entered into the silly bargain, but kept to their manhood; as in truth did the Delawares, when their eyes were opened to their folly. You see before you a chief of the great Mohican Sagamores! Once his family could chase their deer over tracks of country wider than that which belongs to the Albany Patterroon, without crossing brook or hill that was not their own; but what is left to their descendant! He may find his six feet of earth when God chooses, and keep it in peace, perhaps, if he has a friend who will take the pains to sink his head so low that the plowshares cannot reach it!"

Cooper's place is clear as a writer in the field of strictly legitimate romance—the romance of real life, of stirring adventure and daring deeds, made romantic simply by their inaccessibility to most men at most times. His kinship is with Scott and Stevenson and all large, healthy, out-of-door natures. Moreover, he has some claim to consideration among writers of universal interest in virtue of the elemental passions with which he deals, for the fashions of human heroism do not change. Had his insight and his art been equal to his idealizing imagination, he would have been second to no writer of modern romance. His old trapper stands upright in the death-hour and answers "Here" as Colonel Newcome answers "Adsum!" David Gaunt goes forth to battle like David of old, with a sling in his hand and a song on his lips. The mourning of the Delawares over the body of Uncas reminds

us of the mourning of the Trojans over the body of Hector. Leather-Stocking straps the aged Chingachgook on his back and carries him out of the forest-fire as Æneas carried Anchises out of burning Troy. Indeed, the fundamental conception of Leather-Stocking and his rifle Kill-deer suggests a comparison with Odysseus and his bow or King Arthur and his good sword Excalibur. But we may not make the comparison. We can only deplore the fatal defects that marred a genius which might otherwise have set at the beginning of our literature an epic worthy to stand by the epics of the old world.

EARLY POETRY

That the genius of poetry in America was even more slow to respond to the creative impulse than the genius of prose romance, is made evident by the story of the publication of Bryant's *Thanatopsis*. When, in 1817, the manuscript of that poem appeared in the office of the *North American Review* of Boston—a magazine then but two years old, yet already a criterion of literary taste—it caused no little commotion. Mr. Dana, the most sagacious of the young editors, declared that it could not have been written in America, and would consent to publish it only upon the mistaken assurance of his colleague that Dr. Bryant, the poet's father, then at Boston as senator to the state legislature, was its author. Nor was Mr. Dana's caution unjustified. It is true that nothing could be greatly better in its modest way than Freneau's *Wild Honeysuckle*, written long before, but it is also true that that lyric was, as one of its admirers has called it, little more than a "first stammer." * American poetry became fairly articulate only with *Thanatopsis*. But the young author of 1817 was still quite unknown to fame, and the part that he was to play in American poetry reaches so far through the nineteenth cen-

*Greenough White: *Philosophy of American Literature.*

tury that it will be well here, before considering him, to glance at a few of his contemporaries whose work was associated exclusively with the early decades.

There is perhaps little to keep alive in literary history the names of such men as Washington Allston and John Pierpont except the fact that they published collections of poetry before Bryant. Allston, who is remembered still as a painter, studied art abroad, and had the good fortune while at Rome to become intimate with Coleridge. At Boston, where he resided, he exercised a deep influence upon early art and culture in New England. He published a volume of refined verse, *The Sylphs of the Seasons*, in 1813. Pierpont, who was a Unitarian clergyman of Connecticut, published several volumes of poems, the first in 1816. Many of his verses, such as *Warren's Address to the American Soldiers* ("Stand! the ground's your own, my braves!"), had a touch of grandiloquence in them that made them favorites for recitation. The spirit of the Revolution survived long in poetry of this nature.

Washington Allston, 1779-1843.

John Pierpont, 1785-1866.

Joseph Rodman Drake and Fitz-Greene Halleck, whose names are inseparably associated, and who belonged to the New York group of writers, are two minor poets still held in something like affectionate remembrance. Drake, the younger, showed perhaps the greater promise, but he died of consumption at the age of twenty-five. He was a youth of many graces of both body and mind, who wrote verses as a bird sings, for the pure joy of it. His fame, as well as Halleck's, was made by what was locally known as "The Croakers"—a series of forty poems contributed by them in 1819 to the New York *Evening Post*, and signed "Croaker & Co." Among these was *The American Flag* ("When Freedom from her mountain height"),

Joseph Rodman Drake, 1795-1820.

probably the most widely known of our patriotic poems, though it is too declamatory in tone to be given high praise. The last four lines were written by Halleck:—

> "Forever float that standard sheet!
> Where breathes the foe but falls before us?—
> With freedom's soil beneath our feet,
> And freedom's banner streaming o'er us!"

They are not made readily clear even by careful punctuation, and it is a pity that the finer lines of Drake's were not allowed to stand, in spite of their concluding hyperbole:—

> "As fixed as yonder orb divine,
> That saw thy bannered blaze unfurled,
> Shall thy proud stars resplendent shine,
> The guard and glory of the world."

Drake's longest poem is *The Culprit Fay*, which was published in a volume of selected poems ten years after his death.* It is the story of a fairy who is compelled to do penance for his sinful love of a mortal. The scene is laid in the highlands of the Hudson. It is an airy work of fancy in the manner of Scott and Moore, whose poems were just then at the height of popularity. Like their poems, too, it undeniably

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* The poem was written hastily, and grew out of a conversation with Cooper and Halleck over the possibility of giving old world romance a new world setting. The date commonly given is 1819. Halleck's biographer produces what appears to be incontrovertible evidence that the date should be 1816. Yet Cooper did not move to the neighborhood of New York City until 1817. Moreover, the poem contains these lines:—

> "Joy to thee, Fay! thy task is done,
> Thy wings are pure, for the gem is won."

It is difficult to believe that these lines were written before the appearance of Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, which was published in the spring of 1817, and which has, at the conclusion of *Paradise and the Peri*, these lines:—

> "Joy, joy forever!—my task is done—
> The Gates are passed, and Heaven is won!"

Besides, the tasks set the culprit fay are not unlike the tasks set the fallen Peri

owes much to Coleridge's *Christabel* in melody and imagery, the two qualities into which most of the merits of Drake's poem resolve themselves:—

"The stars are on the moving stream.
And fling, as its ripples gently flow,
A burnished length of wavy beam
In an eel-like, spiral line below;
The winds are whist and the owl is still
The bat in the shelvy rock is hid,
And naught is heard on the lonely hill
But the cricket's chirp and the answer shrill
Of the gauze-winged katydid,
And the plaint of the waiting whip-poor-will,
Who moans unseen, and ceaseless sings,
Ever a note of wail and woe,
Till morning spreads her rosy wings,
And earth and sky in her glances glow."

Fitz-Greene Halleck, 1790-1867.

Halleck was not of New York City by birth, but went thither from his Connecticut home in 1811, and spent nearly forty years there as an accountant, writing verse between whiles when the mood prompted. He rarely wrote with sufficient seriousness for entire success, some caprice of humor or cynicism frequently leading him to lower the tone and spoil the effect of an otherwise fine poem. His best work was done in his youth when, like Drake, he came under the spell of the popular British poets, in his case particularly Campbell and Byron. *Fanny*, his longest poem, which belongs to the same year as his Croaker contributions, and which was written in Byron's satirical vein, though without any of the abiding elements of Byron's work, was immensely popular in its day. A tender monody on *Burns* and a spirited apostrophe to *Red Jacket*, chief of the Tuscaroras, also deserve mention. But Halleck lives for us in two poems only—the martial *Marco Bozzaris*, celebrating the deeds

and death of that Greek patriot in the defence of liberty in 1823, which left him

> "——— Freedom's now, and Fame's,
> One of the few, the immortal names
> That were not born to die;"

and the little elegy of half a dozen stanzas written after the death of his friend Drake, with the frequently quoted prayer:—

> "Green be the turf above thee,
> Friend of my better days!
> None knew thee but to love thee,
> Nor named thee but to praise."

R. H. Dana, 1787-1879.

Richard Henry Dana, a critic and journalist, who was best known in the early twenties for his short-lived *Idle Man*, to which both Bryant and Allston contributed, was another writer who fell under the English romantic influence. His most ambitious piece of verse, *The Buccaneers*, a poem of more than one hundred stanzas, was published in 1827. It is a wild tale of conscience and remorse against a background of high-sea piracy and murder, with supernatural accessories of a burning ship and a spectre horse. It has elements of fascination, but is an uneven production; there are many bad lines, and the good lines have always the disadvantage of suggesting the *Ancient Mariner*. One short lyric of Dana's is worth preserving—*The Little Beach Bird*, beginning,

> "Thou little bird, thou dweller by the sea,
> Why takest thou its melancholy voice,
> And with that boding cry
> Along the waves dost fly?
> Oh rather, bird, with me
> Through the fair land rejoice!"

Nathaniel Parker Willis, though somewhat younger than the foregoing poets, may very properly be considered in this place, because he helped to perpetuate at New York the tradition established there by Irving, Paulding, Halleck, and Drake—a tradition which turned journalism and literature into something of a social pastime. Willis came from Portland, Maine; was a graduate of Yale and an early contributor to the *Youth's Companion*, which his father had founded; founded several magazines himself; was associated with G. P. Morris on the New York *Mirror* and the *Home Journal;* published poems and letters of travel (*Sketches*, 1827, *Pencillings by the Way*, 1835); and was once led, by reporting some social and political gossip, into a conventional and bloodless duel. He had a taste both for society and for rural life, and spent his later years at his beautiful home, "Idlewild," in the Highlands of the Hudson, dying, however, in the pursuit of his profession, which had become at last anything but a pastime. He was for many years a kind of literary autocrat, standing at the head of those sentimental "Knickerbocker" writers who, if we omit Bryant and Poe, dominated New York letters in the palmy days of the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, before the appearance of the manlier poetry of Taylor and Stoddard. Willis had many talents, but employed them mostly upon commonplace and even frivolous themes, where his quick perception, wit, sentiment, and grace, shone to the best advantage. He struck his highest note in the poem, *Unseen Spirits* ("The shadows lay along Broadway"). His sacred poems, such as *Absalom* and *Lazarus and Mary*, are composed in a smooth, well-sustained blank verse, and had at one time wide popularity. But the vogue of Willis passed with the coming of a more strenuous national life and sentiment, and now we have little more than his memory, which, like the golden tress of Melanie, one of his poetic heroines,

N. P. Willis, 1806-1867.

"Floats back upon the summer gale."

To search further among the professed poets of the first third of the century is only to revive, rather uselessly, such names as that of Maria Gowen Brooks, who was once compared with Mrs. Browning, and whose sentimental and highly colored Oriental tale of *Zophiel, or the Bride of Seven* (1825-1833) won for her from Southey the sobriquet of "Maria del Occident"; or that of James Gates Percival, who was sometimes called by courtesy a scholar, and who, among his voluminous verse, left one or two poems, like *The Coral Grove*, of an undeniably distinctive charm. Rather better worth recording, it seems, are the names of a few who, not otherwise thought of as poets, chanced to write a single poem or song of sufficiently genuine feeling and melody to give it more than a fleeting existence. Francis Scott Key, a lawyer of Washington, wrote *The Star-Spangled Banner* on the occasion of the bombardment of Fort McHenry by the British in 1814. John Howard Payne, the dramatist, won lasting fame with his *Home, Sweet Home*, sung first at the Covent Garden Theatre, London, as a part of his opera, *Clari, the Maid of Milan* (1823). Samuel Woodworth, a journalist of New York, wrote *The Old Oaken Bucket* (1826); George P. Morris, a younger associate of Woodworth's, was the author of *My Mother's Bible* and *Woodman, Spare that Tree.* Dr. Clement C. Moore, a Greek and Hebrew scholar of New York, was the author of that children's classic, founded upon an old Dutch legend, *A Visit from St. Nicholas* ("'Twas the night before Christmas"). In the South, Richard Henry Wilde of Georgia, also a scholar, echoed the melodies of his native Ireland in his stanzas (about 1815), *My Life is Like the Summer Rose*; while the southern romantic and chivalric spirit was fairly represented by Edward Coate Pinkney, a young

Mrs. Brooks, (?) 1795-1845.
J. G. Percival, 1795-1856.
F. S. Key, 1779-1843.
J. H. Payne, 1792-1852.
S. Woodworth, 1785-1842.
G. P. Morris, 1802-1864.
C. C. Moore, 1779-1863.
R. H. Wilde, 1789-1847.
E. C. Pinkney, 1802-1828.

midshipman, who printed at Baltimore in 1825 a small volume of poems containing the one beginning,

"I fill this cup to one made up of loveliness alone."

These were the bardlings and songsters. We turn now to the one man born in America before 1800 whose call to poetry was both high and steadfastly, consistently honored.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT, 1794-1878

Early Life.

William Cullen Bryant virtually belongs, like Irving and Cooper, to New York, though he was a native of New England and wrote his earliest poetry there. He was born in the autumn of 1794 in the little town of Cummington, where the north fork of the Westfield River goes "brawling over a bed of loose stones in a very narrow valley" in the semi-mountainous region of western Massachusetts. He was the second of seven children. His ancestors had been Americans for generations, several of them having been among the passengers of the Mayflower. His father was a physician and surgeon, of abilities quite beyond the small country practice with which he contented himself; he also served several terms in the state legislature. His mother was a model housewife, equally adept, as her diary shows, at "teaching Cullen his letters" and "making him a pair of breeches."

The boy's early schooling was carried on at home and at the district school. At home he had the use of a library exceptionally fine for that time and place, containing, as it did, most of the world's classics from Plutarch to Shakespeare, together with such English classics as Gibbon, Johnson, and Wordsworth. His outdoor sports were many, — trout-fishing, squirrel-hunting, and snow-balling; and there were the time-honored devices for turning work into play at the seasons of making maple-syrup and cider, and husking corn. Barn-raisings and singing-schools varied the diversions. Few of

these things, however, found their way into young Cullen's verses—for he began to write verses in his ninth year. Boy-like, he was ambitious of greater themes and sought exercise in paraphrasing the Book of Job, or in celebrating an eclipse in turgid lines:—

> "How awfully sublime and grand to see
> The lamp of Day wrapped in Obscurity!"

Of course, in this juvenile verse, the sun's ray is "genial," birds "sit upon the spray," "stillness broods," and so forth. It is difficult now to understand how people of taste could ever delight in such circumlocutions as "the lamp of day" or such stately phraseology as "to see the sun remove behind the moon." But so it was. The English poetic models upon which Bryant formed his taste were full of this sort of thing, and he naturally caught the manner. Unfortunately, it was a manner from which he never, even in his best work, entirely escaped. At the age of thirteen he wrote a poem that was published at Boston (1808) in pamphlet form. It was a political satire in five hundred lines, called *The Embargo*, and was aimed at the unpopular policy of Jefferson's administration in closing our ports to foreign commerce because of certain disputes with Great Britain. In it the President was held up to scorn along with Error and Faction and other monsters that made "injured Commerce weep." There was sufficient reason why the poem should be popular then, though there is no reason why it should be remembered now except as the work of a very precocious little boy.

He was sent away to an uncle to learn Latin; then to a minister in a neighboring township, where he paid a dollar a week for his bodily and mental fare, the former chiefly bread and milk, the latter Greek and mathematics. In the fall of 1810 he went to Williams College, where he remained seven months. This completed his schooling. He made some prepa-

ration for continuing his studies at Yale, but his father was unable to send him there, and he had to content himself with chanting Greek choruses among the Hampshire hills, or making his own first essays at poetry.

It was during a ramble among these hills in the autumn of 1811, when he was not yet quite seventeen years old, that the conception of *Thanatopsis* ("Vision of Death") came to him; and the composition immediately followed. He had been reading Blair's poem, *The Grave*, and certain verses of Kirke White's and Southey's, and these may have helped to suggest the sombre theme of his own poem; but the immediate inspiration came from the autumnal scene around him, the subdued colors of earth and sky, the bare branches, the fallen leaves, and the decaying trunks of the forest trees. He went home and, sitting at his father's desk, began to write in the middle of a line;

"Thanatopsis."

> "Yet a few days, and thee
> The all-beholding sun shall see no more
> In all his course."

He broke off, almost as abruptly, in the middle of the forty-ninth line, and left the poem in a pigeon-hole of the desk. There it was afterward found by his father, who had always taken a sympathetic interest in his poetical exercises, and who realized at once that this was a good poem, though it is doubtful whether even a father's pride enabled him to realize just how good. He at least thought it worthy to be offered to the *North American Review*, with the result described earlier in this chapter. It is interesting to turn to that old number of the *Review* and read the poem in its first form. We miss the familiar beginning:—

> "To him who in the love of Nature holds
> Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
> A various language."

We miss also the homily at the close, which, although not the best part of the poem, is the most frequently quoted:—

"So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan which moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

These additions were made when Bryant published his first thin volume of poems in 1821, and a few further changes were made afterward. But the central theme, the universality of death, was fully set forth in the original form and required no changes to make it complete. This youth in his seventeenth year had quite unconsciously produced a poem which none of the brilliant galaxy of poets then ascendant in England would have been ashamed to own. If it be true, as we have said, that no American boy can afford not to read Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography*, it is almost equally true that no one who cares to cultivate a love of the best in poetry can afford not to learn by heart the eighty-one lines of *Thanatopsis*.

Of course the anonymous, fragmentary-looking bit of verse brought no immediate fame to Bryant, who was industriously preparing himself for the very practical life he was destined to lead. He read law, and in 1815 was licensed to practice. The celebrated lines *To a Waterfowl* were the outcome of an incident of this stage in his career. He was walking to a neighboring village with the object of finding a place to open a law office, and chanced to observe the flight of a lone bird across the evening sky.

"Whither, midst falling dew,
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,
Far, through their rosy depths dost thou pursue
Thy solitary way."

He fancied he saw in this uncompanioned voyage along "that pathless coast, the desert and illimitable air," a likeness to his own situation and, full of the forebodings natural to a young man when first confronting the world, he sought to derive from it consolation:—

"He who from zone to zone
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight,
In the long way that I must tread alone
Will lead my steps aright."

After some years of practice at Great Barrington, and after his marriage, which followed upon the lyrical prelude of "Oh fairest of the rural maids," Bryant determined to abandon the law, partly because of his disgust at learning that in that profession mere technicalities could sometimes defeat justice, and partly because he longed for larger opportunities.

In 1825 he went to New York and entered upon what proved to be his lifelong career—journalism. He succeeded rather slowly at first, but after his connection with the *Evening Post*, and especially after his succession to the chief editorship of that journal, his fortunes rapidly mended. He not only made the *Evening Post* a newspaper of the highest rank, but by the purity of his life and ideals, and the courage with which he always espoused what he believed to be the right, he sensibly elevated the somewhat low tone of the American press, and exercised a profound and wholesome influence upon American politics and public life. He lived and acted in the full conviction that, in his own words,

Public Career.

"Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers;
But Error, wounded, writhes in pain,
And dies among his worshippers."

For fifty years he faithfully performed the exacting duties that fell to him, finding change and rest in half a dozen voyages

to Europe, or in such hours of retirement as he could snatch at the old Cummington homestead, or at the beautiful suburban residence he had provided for himself at Roslyn, Long Island. From time to time he gathered his fugitive verses and published a slender volume. Late in life, too, he sought relief from more strenuous duties by translating the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* into the blank verse of which he rightly felt himself to be a master. The translations are a little cold, but for faithfulness and majesty they rank among the best that have been made. These were finished in 1871. For nearly seven years more the poet's mental activity kept pace with his bodily vigor, until the fatal fall, in his eighty-fourth year, on the stone steps of General Wilson's house, just after he had delivered a public address on Mazzini, in the hot sun at Central Park. He died after two weeks of semi-consciousness and was buried at Roslyn.

The Man and the Poet.

Bryant's prose, although several volumes, consisting chiefly of occasional addresses, have been preserved, holds no real place in our literature. It was through his poetry that he won his wide audience, and through the high quality of it only, never from its range or quantity. His poems are all short—the merely necessary and spontaneous expression of a poetic spirit, bound for the most part to a prosaic life. He never attempted anything so large as an epic or a drama. Even in the lyric field he confined himself to simple subjects and long-tried measures, making no experiments in the multitude of forms and moods with which our lyric poetry of the nineteenth century has been enriched. The sensuous warmth of Keats, the ethereal brightness of Shelley, were not in his manner. The Tennysonian idyll and ballad were quite as much beyond his reach as the *ballade* and the *rondeau* that came in with his old age. His employment of the Spenserian stanza is not happy. His few

sonnets are irregular and ineffective. Yet, by such simple magic as he knew, he produced some lyrics that show a mastery of form and music most surprising in one who practiced so little, together with a sincerity of feeling that puts any mere technical mastery quite into the background. There is no better example of this than a poem written late in life (as characteristic, by the way, of Bryant as *Crossing the Bar* is of Tennyson or *Prospice* of Browning)— *Waiting by the Gate*, in which the evening bird, the streaming sunshine, the quiet wood and lea, and the turning hinges of the gate, conspire to make a song and a picture of unfading charm. Other examples almost equally good, and most of them more widely known, are *June*, *The Planting of the Apple Tree*, *Robert of Lincoln*, *The Snow-Shower*, *The Death of the Flowers*.

However, Bryant's peculiar excellence lies in that department of lyric poetry which is farthest removed from all that the word lyric strictly implies—namely, in descriptive and meditative verse. He loves to stand upon Monument Mountain and brood over the slow changes of the centuries, or to walk by Green River, trying to put behind him the cares of existence, and envying the stream

> "as it glides along
> Through its beautiful banks in a trance of song."

Some of his descriptions are as sharp as etchings. Take almost any part of the *Summer Wind*, of the *Winter Piece*, of the *Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood:*—

> "The thick roof
> Of green and stirring branches is alive
> And musical with birds, that sing and sport
> In wantonness of spirit; while below
> The squirrel, with raised paws and form erect,
> Chirps merrily. Throngs of insects in the shade
> Try their thin wings and dance in the warm beam
> That waked them into life."

The Waterfowl, too, is a poem that engraves itself on the memory; to read it is to add a permanent picture to the mind, so that ever afterward the slightest suggestion is sufficient to call up the vision of that dark-limned fowl pursuing its way along the pathless coast. These vivid effects are produced, of course, by a vivid imagination, an imagination that always derives from intensely seized fact. That the strong line in *Thanatopsis*,

"Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste,"

was inserted only after Bryant had seen the ocean, is proof that his inspiration was of the most genuine kind.

Enough has been quoted already to show that Bryant was pre-eminently a poet of nature. Two-thirds of his poems have some aspect of nature for their theme. He belongs to that school of which Wordsworth, among modern English writers, stands at the head. He has often been compared with Wordsworth. It was inevitable, perhaps, that in the case of our early writers these comparisons should be made, as of Irving with Goldsmith, of Cooper with Scott. No harm can come of them, so long as we feel and frankly admit that our own writers are secondary, and even in some measure derivative, while still maintaining that they were never weakly imitative. Bryant was as sincere a lover of Nature as Wordsworth, and had, if not quite the same high endowment, the same divine right, to sing her beauties and her consolations. What the primrose and the daffodil were to Wordsworth, the yellow violet and the fringed gentian were to Bryant, and if ever he seemed to follow Wordsworth it was in a spirit of sympathy, not of emulation. New England has her own flowers and birds, and we can only rejoice that they found their poet.

Yet Bryant was much more than the poet of the Hampshire and Berkshire hills; nor was his vision limited to the birds and flowers. His imagination, large and seer-like,

swept beyond the landscape spread before his eye, exploring the vast reaches of a continent, from "Hudson's western marge" to the

> "palms of Mexico and vines
> Of Texas . . . . . and the limpid brooks
> That from the fountains of Sonora glide
> Into the calm Pacific."

Read *A Forest Hymn*, *The Hurricane*, *A Rain-Dream*, *The Prairies*, *The Night Journey of a River*, and mark how the poet is resistlessly drawn to the larger music and beauty of nature — the anthems of the forest trees and the panorama of the storm; how he traces the currents of life through sap and sunbeam and river; how he penetrates into the graves of the Mound-builders and conjures up pictures of long-gone ages, when

> "lovers walked, and wooed
> In a forgotten language, and old tunes
> From instruments of unremembered form
> Gave the soft winds a voice."

It is this high imaginative gift which Bryant possessed, in common with Cooper of our prose writers, and with Emerson and Whitman of our poets, yet touched in him with a fervor and a reverence all his own, that makes him peculiarly a poet of the new world and of an elder, almost primitive, time—in a word, bardic.

Yet Bryant had limitations fully as marked as his abilities. He had quite as little humor in his composition as certain other poets of "high seriousness"—Dante, for instance, or Walt Whitman. He "had a talent for solitude and silence." Though by no means a man of gloomy disposition, he was overgiven to melancholy musings; in spite of his beautiful lyric of June, he was the poet of October and November,

"Of wailing winds and naked woods and meadows brown and sere."

And he was, in his poetry at least, almost passionless; he gives

but few evidences in it of strong human interests or sympathies, and altogether too few words of hearty, hopeful cheer. His very love of nature was in part a distaste for society—he sought and found in woods and fields a refuge from the turmoil of life and the sordidness of the world. If we did not know so well his character and deeds, we should have imagined him like the river he has described on its night journey, stealing away from the pollution of human abodes to the stainless sea, or like his Wind of Night,

> "A lonely wanderer between earth and cloud,
> In the black shadow and the chilly mist,
> Along the streaming mountainside, and through
> The dripping woods, and o'er the plashy fields,
> Roaming and sorrowing still, like one who makes
> The journey of life alone, and nowhere meets
> A welcome or a friend, and still goes on
> In darkness."

Thanatopsis remains, first and last, his great achievement—in form a perfect example of English blank verse, of which he alone among American writers has attained to any real mastery; in substance an epitome of his powers, with its lofty imagination and its musings upon the themes of nature and death. It barely escapes, too, his besetting melancholy, though, on the whole, it is more consoling than depressing, with the benign presence of Nature felt through it all, and sweet,

> "Strange intimations of invisible things
> Which, while they seem to sadden, give delight,
> And hurt not, but persuade the soul to prayer." *

It has been called a pagan poem, with no ray of Christian hope or promise of immortality. The mere absence of these things does not make it pagan; yet if any one is left unsatisfied with the spirit of reverence that breathes through its lines, he may

* R. H. Stoddard: *The Dead Master.*

find a complement in *The Flood of Years*, that majestic chant written in the poet's eighty-second year. Together the two poems make a perfect confession of faith, and mark both verges of a life and genius that for purity and consecration it would be hard to find excelled.

CHAPTER V

ROMANCE.—POE, HAWTHORNE

The dearth of American literature for nearly two hundred years was essentially a dearth of romance. The cause may be traced in part to Puritanism. The Puritan temperament was not one to indulge visions save such as were born of religion or superstition, and the New England writers rarely turned to fictitious themes. The early chroniclers, for instance, were content to remain chroniclers; they showed no such tendency as John Smith of Virginia to infuse imagination into their narratives. In the non-Puritan South, indeed, had the South been studious of the literary art, romance might have appeared early. As it was, we have seen that the beginnings were made at Philadelphia by Charles Brockden Brown, though not until about 1800. Shortly after that, the romantic spirit, in a poetic guise, could be detected in the ephemeral work of such New York writers as Drake and the elder Dana, or in the poems of Mrs. Brooks, written largely in Cuba. With Irving and Cooper, both also of New York, the creative imagination was finally unfettered and American literature came into being. Little then remained but to refine upon the work of these two prolific writers,—to combine the art of the one with the inventive faculty of the other, and to make those further excursions into the regions of the supernatural or the spiritual that afford the final test of the romancer's power. This is virtually what was done by two writers of the second third of the century, Poe and Hawthorne—the greatest representatives of our literature on its purely creative side. And of these it may be noted that the one to come earliest to fame belonged

externally, by everything but the accident of birth, to the South.

EDGAR ALLAN POE, 1809–1849

It is a striking commentary upon the transitory and unreliable nature of human records that a man should be able to live, as Edgar Allan Poe did, for many years in the public eye, and in an age when everything seems to go on record, and yet leave the simplest facts of his biography surrounded with mystery. Poe's ancestry, the place and date of his birth, his character and manner of life, and the cause and manner of his death, have all been subjects of doubt and sometimes of violent dispute. This is due in some measure to the irregularity of his life, which made mystification on his part possible or even desirable, and in some measure to the prejudices of his critics. The main facts and dates seem to be now settled, but in the more delicate matter of character and habits we must still speak in qualified terms.

Youth.

Edgar Allan Poe was born, the second of three children, at Boston, January 19, 1809. His father was a Baltimorean, the son of a Revolutionary patriot, possibly of Irish descent. His mother was of English birth. Both were members of a theatrical company then playing at Boston. Nearly three years later, by the death of the mother, at Richmond, Virginia, the children were left orphans. Edgar was adopted by Mr. John Allan, a Scotchman who had made a fortune in Virginia in the tobacco trade. He was brought up in luxury, a much spoiled child—petted for his beauty and precocity, amusing himself with dogs and ponies at summer resorts, and declaiming on the table for Mr. Allan's guests while they drank their wine. In his seventh year he was taken to England and put into school in a London suburb, an experience which afterward furnished a setting for the story of *William Wilson*. Five years later he returned with his adoptive parents to Richmond. At the age of seventeen, a proud,

reserved, half-melancholy and wholly self-willed youth, he entered the University of Virginia. There he studied the ancient and modern languages and practiced athletics and the several "gentlemanly" forms of dissipation. He was withdrawn by Mr. Allan for incurring gambling debts. From the tedious routine of Mr. Allan's counting-room he ran away to Boston, published there an anonymous little volume of forty pages—the Byronic *Tamerlane and Other Poems* (1827)—and enlisted in the army under an assumed name. * Poe afterward allowed the story to be circulated that during this period he had gone abroad to assist the Greeks in their struggle for liberty, like Byron, and that he had spent part of the time in St. Petersburg. Mr. Allan, discovering his whereabouts, secured his discharge from the army, and obtained his appointment, as a cadet, to West Point. A few months of the severe discipline of that school, however, sufficed for Poe's restless nature, and it is probable that he deliberately brought upon himself the dismissal which followed. He found himself adrift, at the age of twenty-two, with nothing further to expect from Mr. Allan.

Manhood.

Literature presented itself as his most natural vocation. Poe had, indeed, begun to take himself very seriously as a poet before he was twenty, and he had published a second volume at Baltimore while waiting for his cadetship. This volume contained, in addition to a revision of the ambitious *Tamerlane* and some minor poems, the mystical and scarcely intelligible *Al Aaraaf*. A second edition, issued at New York shortly after his expulsion from West Point, contained several new poems of real promise, like *Israfel* and *To Helen*. But poverty and the maturing of his powers conspired to turn his attention to prose, and his first success of note was made through that medium. In 1833 a Baltimore

* Woodberry's *Poe*, American Men of Letters Series.

weekly, *The Saturday Visiter*, offered a prize of one hundred dollars for the best prose tale submitted. Poe, then in desperate straits, submitted half a dozen. *A MS. Found in a Bottle* was awarded the first prize. John P. Kennedy, the novelist, who was one of the judges, took a kindly interest in the author, securing him some work in journalism, and probably providing even food and clothing. Poe was then living at Baltimore with his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, and her daughter Virginia. Two years later he went to Richmond to assist in editing the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and about the same time married Virginia Clemm. She was a mere child, scarcely fourteen, but Poe, whose reverence for women was his noblest trait, loved and cared for her devotedly through all the vicissitudes of poverty and ill health that ensued, until her death eleven years later, a short time before his own. The inspiration of some of his finest creations—the child lovers of *Eleonora*, for instance—is to be found in this tender and ill-fated attachment.

It is a melancholy history to follow, a history of fierce struggle and final defeat. That Poe should be blamed for waging war upon society as he sometimes did, is not clear; on the principle of retaliation there was much to justify him. Yet we must feel that if he had only spent the little moral strength that was given him in waging war upon his own weaknesses, the end might have been happier. When fame did come to him, it was accompanied with envy and detraction, and he never had any measure of real prosperity. His wilful and erratic temperament, further perverted by his more or less frequent yielding to the temptations of liquor and opium, made any continued effort impossible. One career after another was opened to him only to be closed again; one enterprise after another was undertaken only to fail or be abandoned. The eighteen months at Richmond were followed by seven years at Philadelphia, where he edited successively *The Gentleman's Magazine* and *Graham's Magazine*. In the editorship

of the latter he was succeeded by Rufus W. Griswold, who became, after Poe's death, his hostile biographer. This was the period of his greatest productiveness. In 1838 was published *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, a fantastic and horrible but professedly realistic sea-tale. In 1839 appeared *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque.* Through this period, too, must have been written many of the poems that were published in the volume of 1845, *The Raven and Other Poems.* In 1844 he went to New York, and finally took up his residence at a cottage at Fordham, on the outskirts of the city. There, in January, 1847, his wife died, and he followed her body to the grave wrapped in the military cloak that had been her last coverlet against the winter's cold. A severe illness succeeded, from which he recovered physically, but the Poe of the remaining two years was scarcely the same man, —the wreck of a wreck, though able yet to compose such monodies of madness as *Eureka* and *The Bells* and *Ulalume.* The end came tragically. He was returning to New York from a visit to Richmond in the autumn of 1849, when chance brought him and election day together in the city of Baltimore. He was found in an election booth intoxicated, or drugged, or both, and was taken to a hospital where he died in a delirium several days later.

His Character.

Immediately men's fancies began to play with the memory of the erratic genius, and a process of myth-making began which has gone on for half a century, transforming Poe into a kind of superhuman creature, angelic or diabolic according to the prejudices of the myth-maker. The mere seeker for facts is everywhere met by such maundering as that of Griswold, who, shortly after Poe's death, described him as one who "would walk the streets, in madness or melancholy, with lips moving in indistinct curses, or with eyes upturned in passionate prayer," or who, "with his glances introverted to a heart gnawed with anguish, and with a face

shrouded in gloom, would brave the wildest storms, and all night, with drenched garments and arms beating the winds and rains, would speak as if to spirits that at such times only could be evoked by him from the Aidenn." It is almost impossible now to get behind this veil of tradition and see the man Poe face to face as his fellows saw him, a desperate struggler for his daily bread. Even with the clearest light, so complex a character as his would be hard to analyze and still harder to judge. We must admit that, with all his genius, he was morally delinquent on many counts. He lacked a fine sense of honor. He had no adequate conception of a man's duties either to himself or to his fellows, and though many stood ready to befriend him, he lived in spiritual solitude, the friend of no man. He did not exactly lack will, as has been so often said, for he acted vigorously through his short life; but he seemed not to recognize any specific moral ends toward which a man should bend his activity. He was full of contradictions. Though possessed of a keen, cool, logical mind, he was always toying with speculations that sober science repudiates. His exalted dreams of purity and goodness were in strong contrast to the perversity of his deeds. It is doubtful whether he knew the meaning of the word morality, and the judge of his character must feel that if there be such a thing as a man who can do evil deeds without being himself evil, Poe was that man. At any rate, between his admirers and his detractors one may most safely take the middle ground that his was not a case for either praise or blame, but only pity. Heredity and training were against him, the very conditions of American life were adverse, and the tragedy of his career is best remembered in sorrow. After all, his works are our permanent possession, and the highest of them were touched only with the misery and pathos of his life, never with its dishonor.

Poe's work as a journalist and critic does not call for much

comment. In the circle of his authority he came to be well known and feared; and the independence of his views and his frankness in expressing them did a real service to the profession of literary criticism in America, which had degenerated to mere idle compliment and mutual admiration. But his critical method was not the method of calm inquiry which sets up standards and judges fearlessly and honestly by them. He was fearless enough, but unfair. He had critical acumen and exquisite literary sensibilities, and so long as he depended on these he did well. He knew the marks of genius; a Tennyson or a Hawthorne, even though unknown to fame, was immediately known to Poe. But his foolish prejudices and personal jealousies often rendered his judgments worthless. A man who could write an article on *Longfellow and Other Plagiarists* was not likely to carry with him either sympathy or conviction. He was too extravagant and too fond of the sensational. The charge of literary theft in particular he liked to make, though he rarely proved anything more than a measure of indebtedness which the authors themselves would have been ready to acknowledge. Efforts have since been made to show that he was himself not innocent of plagiarism. But these efforts have succeeded scarcely better than his own. That he should have gone to Macaulay's *Warren Hastings* instead of to an encyclopædia for a description of the holy city of Benares, which he needed in his *Tale of the Ragged Mountains*, counts for little. And as for the many striking parallels between his poems and those of a certain Dr. Chivers, of Georgia,* the only conclusion an impartial student can reach is that Chivers owed far more to Poe than Poe ever owed to Chivers. Probably Poe has been the least "influenced" of all melodious poets since Spenser.

Minor Prose.

Poe's best criticisms of a general nature are his essays on

* Joel Benton: *In the Poe Circle.*

The Poetic Principle and *The Philosophy of Composition*, though both must be read guardedly. One of the theories laid down in the first, that there can be no such thing as a long poem, may be supported only by assuming that there is no poetry but lyrical or emotional poetry. The second essay is occupied with an explanation of the mechanical way in which *The Raven* was constructed—a very entertaining explanation, but one that no one who knows Poe or who knows poetry will accept as final. His so-called scientific or philosophical works, *Eureka* and the rest, are worthless. He loved to make a great show of learning by all sorts of obscure references, but he had little real scholarship, and though he was a subtle analyst he was not a profound reasoner. His greatness lay in his imaginative work —his tales and his poems.

The Tales.

The tales may be said to constitute a distinct addition to the world's literature. From time immemorial there have been tales in prose and in verse, tales legendary, romantic, and humorous, but never any quite like Poe's. How difficult it is to find any derivation for them may be seen from the fact that the writers most commonly mentioned as having given some direction to Poe's genius are Defoe and Bulwer! Godwin and the German Hoffman would be nearer the mark, yet very distant still. "Bizarre" and "terrific" are the words which Kennedy in his helplessness applied to the tales; and the words represent fairly the first impression which they will always make, for the two qualities of strangeness and power are to be found in nearly all. A few are grotesque only, but they are among the weakest and are seldom read. Perhaps we may venture to divide the important ones, according to their dominant motives, into analytical tales, allegorical or moral tales, and tales of the supernatural.

The analytical tales are tales embracing situations that call for the acutest exercise of the human reason—the unravelling of a mystery, the detection of some obscure law of nature,

or the achievement of some difficult feat by the resources of science. *The Gold-Bug* is one of the best of this type. It has in it a strong element of adventure, but that Poe's chief interest did not lie in this is shown by the fact that the climax of the story is not the finding of Captain Kidd's treasure, but the deciphering of the cryptogram through which the treasure was found. Other writers of such stories, Jules Verne, for instance, in his *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, invert this order. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, *The Mystery of Marie Roget*, and *The Purloined Letter* are all what we should call "detective stories," and are the forerunners of many stories of their kind from sensational novels up to novels of elaborate mystery and skill, like Wilkie Collins's *Moonstone*. To be convinced of Poe's influence in this field one needs only to read his *Purloined Letter* and then *A Scandal in Bohemia* in Dr. Conan Doyle's *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Several of the analytical tales have subsidiary elements of interest, notably horror in the baboon murderer of the Rue Morgue, an element which Mr. Kipling, with questionable art, has ventured to make the sole theme of his gruesome *Bimi*. Among the tales of adventure with a back-ground of semi-scientific speculation are *Hans Pfaal* (the story of a trip to the moon), *A MS. Found in a Bottle*, and *A Descent into the Maelström*. In the two latter, however, the interest of mere ingenuity is overshadowed by the interest of the narratives themselves, enriched, as they are, with all the resources of Poe's imagination. It may well be that the wild fancy of a descent into the maelström grew primarily out of a mathematical theorem concerning the action of cylinders in a vortex, but the qualities that give that tale its distinction and its power, lifting it entirely out of its class, are higher than this. It is in such passages as the following, where subtlety of analysis gives way before the splendor and majesty of the pictured scene, that we find the real genius of Poe:

"'We are now,' he continued in that particularizing manner which distinguished him—'we are now close upon the Norwegian coast—in the sixty-eighth degree of latitude—in the great province of Nordland—and in the dreary district of Lofoden. The mountain upon whose top we sit is Helseggen, the Cloudy. Now raise yourself up a little higher—hold on to the grass if you feel giddy—so—and look out, beyond the belt of vapor beneath us, into the sea.'

"I looked dizzily, and beheld a wide expanse of ocean, whose waters wore so inky a hue as to bring at once to my mind the Nubian geographer's account of the *Mare Tenebrarum*. A panorama more deplorably desolate no human imagination can conceive. To the right and left, as far as the eye could reach, there lay outstretched, like ramparts of the world, lines of horribly black and beetling cliff, whose character of gloom was but the more forcibly illustrated by the surf which reared high up against it its white and ghastly crest, howling and shrieking forever. . . .

"As the old man spoke, I became aware of a loud and gradually increasing sound, like the moaning of a vast herd of buffaloes upon an American prairie; and at the same moment I perceived that what seamen term the *chopping* character of the ocean beneath us, was rapidly changing into a current which set to the eastward. Even while I gazed this current acquired a monstrous velocity. Each moment added to its speed—to its headlong impetuosity. In five minutes the whole sea as far as Vurrgh was lashed into ungovernable fury; but it was between Moskoe and the coast that the main uproar held its sway. Here the vast bed of the waters, seamed and scarred into a thousand conflicting channels, burst suddenly into frenzied convulsion—heaving, boiling, hissing,—gyrating in gigantic and innumerable vortices, and all whirling and plunging on to the eastward with rapidity which water never elsewhere assumes except in precipitous descents.

"In a few minutes more there came over the scene another radical alteration. The general surface grew somewhat more smooth, and the whirlpools one by one disappeared, while prodigious streaks of foam became apparent where none had been seen before. These streaks, at length, spreading out to a great distance, and entering into combination, took unto themselves the gyratory motion of the subsided vortices, and seemed to form the germ of another more vast. Suddenly—very suddenly—this assumed a distinct and definite existence in a circle of more than a mile in diameter. The edge of the whirl

was represented by a broad belt of gleaming spray; but no particle of this slipped into the mouth of the terrific funnel, whose interior, as far as the eye could fathom it, was a smooth, shining, and jet-black wall of water, inclined to the horizon at an angle of some forty-five degrees, speeding dizzily round and round with a swaying and sweltering motion, and sending forth to the winds an appalling voice, half-shriek, half-roar, such as not even the mighty cataract of Niagara ever lifts up in its agony to Heaven. The mountain trembled to its very base, and the rock rocked."

The allegorical tales, comparatively few in number, are weakened in point of art by their moral intent. *William Wilson* is an allegory of the two-fold nature of man—of the conflict between the upward tendency to good and the downward tendency to evil. Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is another story with the same theme. But *William Wilson*, though written in a flowing style and with patient, deliberate art, is not a great tale. The moral is crystallized, not held in solution. What should be the undermeaning is on the surface: the tale yields to the homily. We note, too, an incongruous mixture of things real and things unreal. The details of the background are faithfully given only to be completely lost sight of again: they are not organic. Hence the story, as a story, fails. *The Black Cat* is much better, and is, indeed, one of Poe's best known tales. It is possible to read it and scarcely perceive the underlying motive of the accusing conscience. Its only weak point is one common to all the tales—a lack of characterization. Poe's characters are never real human beings, and no matter what atrocities they commit or what agonies they suffer, we feel neither disgust nor sympathy we are moved purely by the abstract horror of the situation. Poe lacked the tear-compelling power which even a caricaturist like Dickens possessed. But for naked horror *The Black Cat* is hardly to be surpassed. It certainly produces an effect, and that, Poe declared, was the main object in most of his tales. *The Man of the Crowd* and *The Tell-Tale Heart* are also tales

of conscience, though less distinctly allegorical. *The Masque of the Red Death* is allegorical, but without moral significance, —the fear it symbolizes is purely physical. But this is another of Poe's most successful fantasies, at once gorgeous and spectral, ridiculously impossible yet awfully real.

In these several forms of narrative—the detective story, the tale of pseudo-science, the moral allegory—Poe's influence has been both wide and deep. But there is another domain in which his unique genius found a still higher expression and in which he has had no successful imitators. This is the domain of the supernatural. Here belong the tales of *Berenice*, *Morella*, *Shadow*, Poe's own favorite *Ligeia*, and that tale which critical opinion commonly ranks highest—*The Fall of the House of Usher*. The motive of the two last is one of the most fantastic and terrible in the field of romance. It is the idea, which seems to have been almost a hallucination with Poe, of the possible life of the spirit, that is, of the thinking, sentient part of man, after the death of the body—not immortality, be it understood, but a temporary prolonging of spirit life by sheer power of will. Yet the motive, gruesome as it is, is saved by the cunning of the artist from being repulsive or ridiculous ; for Poe builds up, with unerring skill, his effects of transcendent beauty and at the same time transcendent horror and awe. It would be almost as difficult to say how the effects are produced as it would be to say why a violin fantasia has the power to move or fascinate, but the perfection of the art that produces them is no more to be questioned in the one case than in the other.

The deficiencies of the tales we must grant, though we need not hold the deficiencies to be defects. They contain nothing refreshing, nothing morally uplifting or sweetly humanizing. The sunshine is not the broad sunshine of the fields,—it comes sifted through dense foliage or colored glass. The winds blow from caverns and vaulted tombs. The color on the cheeks is

hectic, the mirth is hysterical. Everywhere are grief and madness, disease and death. But the æsthetic passion, which supplied in Poe the place of the ethic passion, works a transfiguration, making beauty even out of ugliness and ghastliness. Two or three impressions, indeed, must be left abidingly upon every reader of Poe's prose. First, there is the charm of the language itself, sometimes swift and strong, as in the description of the setting sun that, "a dim, silver-like rim alone, rushed down the unfathomable ocean," sometimes lyric in its melody, as in the description of "Venice, a star-beloved Elysium of the sea, the wide windows of whose Palladian palaces look down with a deep and bitter meaning upon the secrets of her silent waters." With this goes the fascination of the vivid scenes, ranging from terror to beauty and sublimity. What a picture is that of the spectral crew:—"their knees trembled with infirmity; their shoulders were bent double with decrepitude; their shrivelled skins rattled in the wind; their voices were low, tremulous, and broken; their eyes glistened with the rheum of years; and their gray hairs streamed terribly in the tempest." Or who that has once seen in imagination ever forgets the "Valley of the Many-Colored Grass," the noble hall "in a dim city called Ptolemais," the "black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre" by the melancholy house of Usher? Lastly, there is the magic touch, the necromancer's wand, which removes all these scenes into the uncharted realm of the supernatural and invests them with a kind of sacred awe, so that one who has wandered for an hour in the country of Poe comes back to this every-day world like a dreamer and an alien.

His Poetry.

The poetry of Poe's mature years has the same attributes, only it is, as poetry should be, still more ethereal. If we had not come to demand so much of poetry, there could be little hesitation in ranking Poe's with the very greatest in any language. But cultivated readers have fallen

into the habit of searching beneath emotions for moral and intellectual stimulus. They want, in Matthew Arnold's phrase, a "criticism of life," and failing to find that, they are dissatisfied. Now that, Poe cannot be said to afford—life as we know it he scarcely touches at all. But youth, that is always a poet and that knows little of definitions, reads Poe and says, "This is pure poetry." And the test should satisfy us about Poe and make us doubt our definitions. Beyond all question, whatever Poe lacked—and he lacked many things—he possessed the two fundamental attributes of a poet, melody and imagination, in a supreme degree. They are attributes, too, that speak for themselves, requiring no proof or argument. When *The Raven* was published in Willis's *Evening Mirror* in January, 1845, America knew for a certainty that English literature had another poet to reckon with. *The Raven* immediately became, and remains, one of the most widely known of English poems; it can be mentioned anywhere without apology or explanation, and there is scarcely a lover of melodious verse who cannot repeat many of its lines and stanzas. Strange it seems that Poe's poetic genius should ever require vindication.

It is true, the product is meagre. *The Raven*, *The Bells*, *Ulalume*, *Annabel Lee*, *The Haunted Palace*, *The Conqueror Worm*, *Israfel*, *To Helen*, *To One in Paradise*, *The City in the Sea*—one can almost count on the fingers his great poems. But that is true of many notable poets, even where the product is large. Poe's trash (certain stanzas, for instance, in *For Annie*) is very sorry trash, but there is not a great deal of it, and there is practically no mediocre verse. What is good touches the high watermark of excellence.

And its quality is unmistakable. Its appeal is to the sentiment of Beauty—the one appeal which, according to Poe's theory, is the final justification of any poem. Language is made to yield its utmost of melody. From words, even from letters, one might say—for Poe actually fabricated words

whose sounds would suit his purpose—effects are wrested such as had never been wrested before.

"The skies they were ashen and sober;
The leaves they were crispèd and sere,—
The leaves they were withering and sere,—
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid-region of Weir,—
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

This is haunting music, though here again, as in the tales, if we seek to know precisely how the effect is secured, we are baffled. The ordinary devices of alliteration, refrains, and repetends, are freely used, but no mere resort to those devices can parallel the effect. The truth is, the verse is not only haunting, but haunted. In it is the strange, unearthly imagery, and over it is the spectral light, that only Poe's imagination could create. To a beauty of language, by its very nature as indescribable as music, is added a weird enchantment of scene that vanishes before any attempt to reclothe it in other words. Analysis and criticism are helpless before this final achievement of Poe's art—the creation of that "supernal loveliness" which, he declared, it is the struggle of all fit souls to apprehend.

Beyond this we may scarcely go. There are dark hints of other things in Poe's poetry. The Raven of his dreams is, in the words of Mr. Stedman, "an emblem of the Irreparable, the guardian of pitiless memories." The Haunted Palace and the Conqueror Worm have a direct and almost frightful allegorical significance. And what music may not come from the lute of Israfel, what hopes are not barred by the legended tomb of Ulalume? But we gain little from the study of these things, indeed we almost resent any covert significance. For of Poe's poetry, as of his highest prose, it must be said that it

makes almost no moral appeal. Nothing is conceived on a moral plane. He has nothing to teach us—no mission, no message. But the sounds and the visions remain, the poet's mastery over the secrets of the terrible, the mysterious, the sublime, and the beautiful; and we may well rest content to listen without questions to the wild measures of Israfel's lute, to gaze awe-stricken upon the city in the sea, or to pass speechless by the dim lake of Auber and through the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Poe's Position in Literature.

By all that has been said, Poe's romantic temper is made plain. It does not betray itself in any dominant love for nature, nor in any tender sentimentalizing, but rather in a passion for the antique, the highly adorned, the odd, the gloomy, the marvellous, —in a word, for that "strangeness in beauty" which Mr. Pater, borrowing a phrase from Bacon, has declared to be the distinctive romantic note. Poe was passionately fond of mystery, and he was drawn irresistibly to the supreme mysteries of life and death. In so far as his work is morbidly psychological, it allies him with Charles Brockden Brown, and through him with the metaphysical school of Godwin, though Poe's imagination was of a higher order. If we must name any prototype, it would be Coleridge. But Poe was Poe. We may account for Longfellow, for Hawthorne, for Emerson; but the individual note, the "inexpressible monad" which evolutionary science itself as yet fails to account for, was peculiarly strong in Poe, and we must leave him underived. Abroad he has long been considered as a creative writer of the first rank. It is to the shame of Americans that they have seldom been able to take quite his full measure; but our best critics have been instinctively attracted to him, and it is worthy of note that his works have lately been honored with a scholarly and fairly definitive critical edition—an honor which, not to consider statesmen, like Franklin,

or the early historians or theologians, has fallen to no other American man of letters.

FROM SOUTH TO NORTH

Our review of the minor fiction that was produced contemporaneously with the earliest and, in general, the best work of Cooper closed with the record of one writer of the region south of New York—John Pendleton Kennedy, of Baltimore. Accompanying and following Kennedy, whose activity in fiction was not long continued, were several writers who availed themselves, like him, of the romantic possibilities of their environment, and so became, in their modest way, more distinctively romancers of the South than Poe, whose genius was really of no land or clime. One of these was a certain Dr. Bird, of Delaware and Philadelphia, an early explorer of the Mammoth Cave, and an industrious writer of tragedies and tales. Two romances of Mexico—*Calavar* (1834) and *The Infidel* (1835)—received high praise from Prescott; and the once famous Kentucky romance, *Nick of the Woods, or the Jibbenainosay* (1837), had the merit of portraying the North American savages without any of Cooper's idealization.

Robert Montgomery Bird, 1803-1854.

The writer of the South, however, who was most genuinely moved by its romantic scenes and legends, and who succeeded in doing for colonial and border life there a service similar to that Cooper did for the North, was William Gilmore Simms, of Charleston, South Carolina. Simms began his career as a lawyer, but soon adopted the profession of journalism and literature. To the end he remained a professional author, writing both poetry and prose with great facility—romance, drama, history, and criticism. His published works number over sixty titles. Perhaps the best of his romances is *The Yemassee*, published in 1835, a tale of the war in 1715 between the early Carolina settlers and the

William Gilmore Simms, 1806-1870.

Indians. Others are *Guy Rivers* (1834), a tale of Georgia; *The Partisan* (1835), a tale of Marion's men; *Mellichampe* (1836), another tale of the Revolution; and *Beauchampe* (1842), a tale of Kentucky. Hastily written, his stories are naturally deficient in the higher qualities of construction and style, but they have plenty of vigor and imaginative color, and their vogue is still great enough to warrant their publication in fairly complete editions.

William Starbuck Mayo, 1812-1895.
Herman Melville, 1819-1891.

To New York belonged several writers of tales of adventure whose scenes were laid on shipboard or in remote quarters of the earth. One of these was Dr. Mayo, the author of *Kaloolah* (1849), an extravagant story of Yankee exploration in the wilds of Africa. Another, and more important, was Herman Melville, who in his youth embarked upon a whaling vessel bound for the Pacific and spent several years, a portion of the time in captivity, among the South Sea Islands. The series of partly fanciful tales founded upon his experiences—*Typee* (1846), *Omoo* (1847), *Moby Dick, or the White Whale* (1851), etc.,—had a wide circulation, and an occasional admirer can still be found who will pronounce them superior to Cooper's. They differ from Cooper's tales of the sea in that they portray, not the life of the merchant or the naval officer, but the life of the common sailor who ships "before the mast."

Richard Henry Dana, Jr., 1815-1882.

Superior, however, to all these tales in quality, and scarcely inferior in romantic interest, is the wholly truthful narrative of *Two Years Before the Mast.* It was written by Richard Henry Dana, Jr., son of the author of *The Buccaneers*, and was published in 1840. Obliged by some weakness of the eyes to suspend his course of studies at Harvard, Dana went to sea in the American merchant service, and of the faithful record of his experiences in the journey around Cape Horn and trading up and down the coast of California he made a book that in its fascination for youth-

ful readers is a rival not only of Cooper's stories but almost of *Robinson Crusoe* itself.

Few romances of the extravagant type came out of New England. Even Dana's narrative—for Dana was a New Englander—had the warrant of truth. For the justification of fiction the warrant of a moral purpose might serve, but pure physical adventure for the mere entertainment of it was little likely to be tolerated. And so, as we search among the minor romancers of New England, we find only such writers as William Ware and Sylvester Judd, both Unitarian ministers, and both writers who enlisted romance in the cause of religion. Ware's books—*Zenobia* (first printed as *Letters from Palmyra*, 1837), *Aurelian* (first printed as *Probus*, 1838), and *Julian* (1841)—portray, with considerable learning and imagination, the conflict of Christianity and paganism in the days of the decline of Rome. It is the type of romance since made familiar to us by the greater work of the English Kingsley and the German Ebers. Judd's one book of importance was *Margaret, a Tale of the Real and the Ideal* (1845), a story at once more realistic and more fantastic than Ware's stories. In spite of its crudeness and prolixity, it long held a respectable place on New England bookshelves, both for its vigorous portraiture of Maine life and scenery and for the rare spirituality which it throws about its central character. Lowell's rather extravagant praise of it, in his *Fable for Critics*, as

William Ware, 1797-1852.

Sylvester Judd, 1813-1853.

> "the first Yankee book
> With the *soul* of Down East in't, and things farther East,"

doubtless prolonged its life. About all we care to preserve of it is a certain description of a snowstorm which has often been reprinted and which may well be read for its own sake.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE, 1804-1864

From writers like those just described it is not difficult to make the transition to the most spiritual of American roman-

cers—Nathaniel Hawthorne. And it should be noted in passing that we have returned once more, and for a long stay, to New England soil. For, after Poe, the names of first importance that follow immediately in the wake of those pioneers of our literature who were considered in the preceding chapter, belong almost without exception to New England. The old centre of literary activity regains its prestige: New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore yield to Boston, Cambridge, and Concord, and we confront that remarkable group of men who have stamped our literature with their own characteristics of courage, manliness, and ideality. Why the New England literary spirit should have lain so comparatively dormant during the early years of our nationality is not easy to say. Of course there could not be any high development of literature without a highly developed sense of art, and we have seen that the Puritan temper was hostile to art, as something savoring of luxury and vain-glory, or even idolatry. The Puritan spirit was easily aroused in a moral cause, hardly in an æsthetic one. And we cannot fail to note that even of this great group of New Englanders who gave us the body, as it were, of our nineteenth century literature, the majority were primarily scholars, thinkers, and moralists, and only secondarily artists. Emerson, Thoreau, Webster, Whittier, Lowell, even Holmes, fought in some cause of freedom or righteousness. Only Longfellow in poetry and Hawthorne in prose held steadfastly to the fundamental principles of creation for artistic ends; and Longfellow's scholastic and didactic instincts are never far from the surface, while in Hawthorne the moral purpose comes plainly into sight. The romance, however, in the choice of which as the sole medium of his expression Hawthorne stands apart from the rest of the group, is essentially a form of pure art, and that fact Hawthorne never allowed himself to forget.

Nathaniel Hawthorne was born at Salem, Massachusetts,

July 4, 1804. The absence of a clerical ancestry in his case is noteworthy, as also in the case of Longfellow, the other of the great New England writers in whom we have just remarked that the artistic bent was not subordinate to the ethical. Hawthorne's ancestors were magistrates, soldiers, and seamen; one of them, a judge during the witchcraft trials, dealt so harshly with an accused woman as to call down upon his head a curse, and from the story of that curse sprang in good time *The House of the Seven Gables.* The father was a sea-captain who died of a fever at Surinam in 1808. The mother spent the remainder of her life—forty years—in the closest seclusion, and the little Nathaniel and his two sisters would have had a dark time of it but for the mother's family, the Mannings, with whom they went to live. In 1813 they removed to the Manning estate on the Sebago Lake in Maine, and it is there that Hawthorne's happiest years were spent. The lonely life of nature, where in summer he roamed through the woods with his gun, or in winter skated on the lake until midnight, was at least better for him than the lonely, unsocial life of the town—all the better, perhaps, in view of his delicate health and his confessed "grievous disinclination to go to school." In due time, however, he was sent back to Salem to prepare for college, whence he wrote letters of playful complaint to his mother:

Boyhood.

> "I am quite reconciled to going to college, since I am to spend my vacation with you. Yet four years of the best part of my life is a great deal to throw away. I have not yet concluded what profession I shall have. . . . Oh that I were rich enough to live without a profession! What do you think of my becoming an author, and relying for support upon my pen?"

A beautiful and somewhat wilful youth, whose discipline had been neglected, he was not always easy to manage, in school or out, and during his residence at Bowdoin College he showed some of the same tendencies as Poe toward dissipation,

at least in its milder forms. But he possessed an essentially noble nature and there were no lasting evil results. His more intimate college mates were Franklin Pierce and Horatio Bridge (see the dedication of *The Snow Image*). Longfellow was a classmate, but there was probably not enough in common between him and Longfellow, who was several years his junior, to draw them closely together, though then and in later life their relations were always cordial.

Seclusion.

After his graduation from Bowdoin in 1825, Hawthorne entered upon, or rather drifted into, a strange mode of life. Though strong, active, and apparently well fitted to do his share of the world's work, he virtually disappeared from the world for a period of twelve or fourteen years. In the seclusion of his Salem home, "by some witchcraft or other carried apart from the main current of life," in a family whose members were in the habit of taking their meals in their private rooms, scarcely, he declared, seeing his elder sister in three months, avoiding society and walking out by night, he was left to pursue whatever course of intellectual work or idleness his fancy prompted. He was actually accomplishing far more than he would have then dared to believe. He could dream undisturbed; he was quietly gathering a precious store of material, some of which may be read now in the *American Note Books;* he was slowly perfecting himself in the art of composition; and above all he was developing the individual traits of his genius in a way that would have been practically impossible had he been surrounded, like Longfellow and Lowell, by the diverse influences of travel and men and books. He had no very definite purpose. He wrote without encouragement and almost without hope. A little collection of seven tales was sent, we are told, to seventeen publishers without success. One hundred dollars secured the publication of *Fanshawe* in 1828, but afterward all the copies of this "literary folly" that could be found were destroyed. Some later tales

fared better. Goodrich published *The Gentle Boy* and three others anonymously in his annual, *The Token*, for 1832. Others appeared in succeeding issues of that annual and in various other magazines. This, added to the help of his friend Bridge, paved the way for the publication, in 1837, of the first series of *Twice-Told Tales*. Longfellow wrote a favorable review of the volume for the *North American Review* (July, 1837), and six hundred copies of the book were sold.

Early Ventures.

The encouragement of this modest success, which yielded him, by the way, no money, had something to do with drawing him out of his seclusion, though it may be imagined that the process was not easy. "I have made a captive of myself," he wrote to Longfellow, "and put me into a dungeon; and now I cannot find the key to let myself out." But the key was found. For a hint of the manner, read the entry in the *American Note Books* under October 4, 1840. Miss Elizabeth Peabody had discovered Hawthorne through his writings, and Hawthorne, through Miss Elizabeth Peabody, had discovered her beautiful and gifted young invalid sister, Sophia Peabody. The deep affection that sprung up between these two was the spur so much needed. The first result was decidedly practical. Hawthorne secured a position, which he held for two years, as weigher and gauger in the Boston Custom House under George Bancroft,—a position in which he learned with a kind of amused surprise that there are other "duties" in this world besides moral and religious ones. The next result was more visionary. In 1841 he joined the experimenters at Brook Farm, an agricultural community established under the leadership of George Ripley.* He spent a fairly happy year there, but abandoned his investment of a thousand dollars the second spring, satisfied that it was not the life for him. He learned a little about farming—that is to say, he

* See Chapter VI.

hoed potatoes and milked cows—and a great deal about human nature, and he carried away experiences that were later woven into *The Blithedale Romance.*

Success.

In 1842 he married Sophia Peabody and took up, courageously enough, a life of poverty, hard literary work, and perfect domestic happiness at Concord,* in the Old Manse, which had already been Emerson's home. There he came to know and value the friendship of Emerson, who, we may well believe, was the inspiration of the allegory of *The Great Stone Face.* Thoreau on a time sold him a boat; and there are memories of all three skating on the river—Emerson wearily, Hawthorne gracefully, Thoreau fantastically. There, too, he was brought into some contact with Alcott and Margaret Fuller and, in short, the whole circle of Concord "philosophers." He published a second volume of *Twice-Told Tales* in 1842 and *Mosses from an Old Manse* in 1846. In the latter year an appointment to the Custom House at Salem, under the Democratic administration of Polk, took him back to his native town. His duties there gave him little time for writing, and when, three years later, a change of administration left him again without a position, his wife said to him encouragingly, "Now you can write your book!" The book thus referred to was promptly written, and early in 1850 ten thousand people, in America and England, were reading *The Scarlet Letter*—up to the present day, it is scarcely too much to affirm, the central book of American literature. It is possible that, if this success had been anticipated—and there was nothing in Hawthorne's earlier experience to lead to such an anticipation—he would have touched more lightly certain passages in the introductory sketch of the Custom House. However that be,

*This Concord, so famous in American letters, is the Massachusetts Concord, also famous in American history, and is not to be confounded with the New Hampshire capital.

the sketch gave considerable offense to his Salem fellow-townsmen, and it was therefore not without satisfaction on his part that he carried out plans already made for a final removal from the place. He cherished no ill-will; and Salem, on her part, has since been proud to point out the site of the Town Pump and the House of the Seven Gables.

Wanderings and Death.

The story of the remainder of his life may be briefly told. With his family (there were two children, Una and Julian—Rose was born shortly afterward), he removed first to Lenox, among the Berkshire Hills in Western Massachusetts. *The House of the Seven Gables*, published in 1851, was written there; there too were written and read and re-read to the children before publication *The Wonder-Book* and *The Snow Image and Other Twice-Told Tales*. The next move was to West Newton, a suburb of Boston, and thence, in 1852, back to Concord, where he had purchased Alcott's house, which he named "The Wayside." *The Blithedale Romance* appeared in that year, and *Tanglewood Tales* in the following. Then came his appointment as consul at Liverpool under the administration of his old friend, Franklin Pierce. After four years in England he resigned his consulship and spent several years in travel on the continent, passing two winters at Rome. Here *The Marble Faun* was conceived (his own daughter, Una, was the model of the spiritual Hilda), to be written out at Florence and in England, and published at London and Boston in 1860. The title of the English edition was *Transformation*. In June of 1860 he returned to Concord. More literary work was projected—*Septimius Felton*, *The Dolliver Romance*, *Dr. Grimshawe's Secret*—but it was not his fortune to write any more in peace, and nothing was completed. He was deeply agitated by the Civil War, the more so because his sympathies were not wholly with his Northern friends; he was in constant concern for the health of his idolized Una; and his own health was rapidly failing. In March, 1864, at

the urgent desire of his friends, he set out for the South in the companionship of his publisher, W. D. Ticknor, only to see Ticknor die suddenly at Philadelphia. A few weeks later he and ex-President Pierce started northward on a similar excursion. But Ticknor's fate became also his own. He died peacefully, on the nineteenth of May, in a hotel at Plymouth, New Hampshire. Longfellow, Emerson, Whittier, Pierce, Agassiz, Lowell, Holmes, and many other friends stood by the grave where he was buried at Concord, on the "hill-top hearsed with pines." The unfinished *Dolliver Romance* lay on his coffin during the funeral; and shortly afterward Longfellow wrote his beautiful tribute:—

"Ah! who shall lift that wand of magic power,
And the lost clew regain?
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower
Unfinished must remain."

His Singleness of Aim.

As the years go by, it becomes more and more apparent that Hawthorne's is quite the rarest genius that has been fostered on the bleak New England shore. To analyze that genius, or even to appraise it rightly, is no easy task. Yet the task is rendered less difficult by the essentially simple nature of the man. From first to last Hawthorne worked steadfastly in a single direction. One concession to friendship he made when he wrote a campaign biography of Franklin Pierce, and another later when he dedicated to the same friend the fruits of his consular experience—the charming sketches of English life and scenery in *Our Old Home*. Apart from these, he never allowed himself to be enticed from the path along which his genius urged him. He seemed to understand precisely the nature, if not entirely the scope, of his powers; and he never felt around for something better or easier or pleasanter to do. He burned many manuscripts, but they were all experiments in the one direction of prose romance,

the necessary apprentice work by which he perfected himself in his difficult art. Even the various *Note Books* that were published after his death were but gathered threads of experience to be woven at a favorable opportunity into the magic web of his dreams.

Tales.

On the basis of form it is possible to make a division of his imaginative work into short tales and long romances, though their substantial singleness of character remains. The tales were written and published at intervals through the early and middle portions of his life. Some of the lightest and brightest were directly addressed to children—the pleasant little histories and biographies of *Grandfather's Chair*, and the delightful modernized versions of Greek and Roman myths in the *Wonder-Book* and *Tanglewood Tales*. Stronger, and higher in aim, are the eighty or more narratives and sketches that make up the several volumes of *Twice-Told Tales* and *Mosses from an Old Manse*. Very slight is the material of which most of them are constructed—an image of snow, a profile-shaped mass of rock, a toll-gatherer on his bridge, an old witch and her pipe, an artist making a mechanical butterfly. Yet they hold us both by the variety of their outward charm and by their deep inner significance. They run through the whole gamut of fancy, from the wildly whimsical and humorous to the intensely sombre and profoundly sad. And woven into them, as the very life and substance of them, are speculations upon many of the gravest problems of existence. Indeed, more of the spiritual history of New England may be found in a single tale like *Young Goodman Brown* or *The Minister's Black Veil*, than in a hundred sermons of the theologians. The material setting is soon discovered to be only a screen upon which to throw the spiritual portrait.

The long romances, of which but four stand completed,

differ from the tales chiefly in their greater elaborateness and sharper delineation of character. *The Scarlet Letter* was the first to be written and published. Poking among the documentary rubbish of the custom house at Salem, the author had brought to light a mysterious scrap of old scarlet cloth with a few pages of explanatory record. Immediately his imagination began to work. Out of the haze of two centuries the New England of the days when Richard Bellingham sat in the governor's chair gradually arose; the streets of Boston were peopled with hooded women, and bearded men in steeple-crowned hats; the jail, the pillory, the whipping-post, the finger of scorn, the badge of dishonor—all the grim accessories of the Puritan tribunal of justice, became once more as things of reality; and upon this background was projected the sorrowful drama of two sinning human hearts, the one persecuted and the other self-tormented even beyond their sinning. Such was the substance of *The Scarlet Letter*, a chapter out of old Puritan life in New England, the work of a professed romancer, creating and analyzing rather than recording, yet more compelling in its truthfulness than the most painstaking of histories.

Romances.

Perhaps no one of the three other romances quite equals *The Scarlet Letter* in imaginative insight or dramatic intensity, though taken together they show better the range of the author's genius. *The House of the Seven Gables*, which is likely to yield greater pleasure to the ordinary reader, presents a more modern phase of the old New England life, with somewhat less of analysis and more of movement. *The Blithedale Romance* strikes farthest out of the Hawthornian track, coming humanly near to our work-a-day world and presenting characters that seem almost more real than the real men and women, now fading into shadows, who once peopled the high-hearted community at Brook Farm. *The Marble Faun*, which was written last, during the years abroad,

differs outwardly from the others in having its scene laid in Italy, and the story resolves itself into what, for those who do not understand the purposes of Hawthorne, is only tantalizing mystery. Yet it, like the others, is devoted to the illumination of moral problems, and the characters are delineated with the same strength and delicacy, while in some of its aspects it reveals the handiwork of a man still further enriched by knowledge and ripened by experience.

Style.

The final seal of security upon Hawthorne's work is the style in which it is written. Airy, sparkling, graceful, flowing, pellucid—the style is all these and much more. Hawthorne plays upon language as upon an instrument of many stops, and the swiftest changes, from irony to pity and from humor to pathos, are made without a discordant note. Better, however, than any description will be an example; and we choose, from *The House of the Seven Gables*, the picture of the hard-hearted Judge Pyncheon overtaken by the ancestral curse and sitting dead in his chair while one by one the hours of his appointments to business duties or social pleasures creep steadily by:

"Well! it is absolutely too late for dinner! Turtle, salmon, tautog, woodcock, boiled turkey, Southdown mutton, pig, roast beef, have vanished, or exist only in fragments, with lukewarm potatoes, and gravies crusted over with cold fat. The judge, had he done nothing else, would have achieved wonders with his knife and fork. It was he, you know, of whom it used to be said, in reference to his ogre-like appetite, that his Creator made him a great animal, but that the dinner-hour made him a great beast. Persons of his large sensual endowments must claim indulgence, at their feeding time. But, for once, the judge is entirely too late for dinner! Too late, we fear, even to join the party at their wine! The guests are warm and merry; they have given up the judge; and, concluding that the free-soilers have him, they will fix upon another candidate. Were our friend now to stalk in among them, with that wide-open stare, at once wild and stolid, his ungenial presence would be apt to change their cheer. Neither would it be seemly in Judge Pyncheon,

generally so scrupulous in his attire, to show himself at a dinner-table with that crimson stain upon his shirt-bosom. By-the-by, how came it there? It is an ugly sight, at any rate; and the wisest way for the judge is to button his coat closely over his breast, and, taking his horse and chaise from the livery-stable, to make all speed to his own house. There, after a glass of brandy and water, and a mutton-chop, a beef-steak, a broiled fowl, or some such hasty little dinner and supper all in one, he had better spend the evening by the fire-side. He must toast his slippers a long while, in order to get rid of the chilliness which the air of this vile old house has sent curdling through his veins.

"Up, therefore, Judge Pyncheon, up! You have lost a day. But to-morrow will be here anon. Will you rise, betimes, and make the most of it? To-morrow! To-morrow! To-morrow! We, that are alive, may rise betimes to-morrow. As for him that has died to-day, his morrow will be the resurrection morn.

"Meanwhile the twilight is glooming upward out of the corners of the room. The shadows of the tall furniture grow deeper, and at first become more definite; then, spreading wider, they lose their distinctness of outline in the dark gray tide of oblivion, as it were, that creeps slowly over the various objects, and the one human figure sitting in the midst of them. The gloom has not entered from without; it has brooded here all day, and now, taking its own inevitable time, will possess itself of everything. The judge's face, indeed, rigid, and singularly white, refuses to melt into this universal solvent. Fainter and fainter grows the light. It is as if another double handful of darkness had been scattered through the air. Now it is no longer gray, but sable. There is still a faint appearance at the window; neither a glow, nor a gleam, nor a glimmer,—any phrase of light would express something far brighter than this doubtful perception, or sense, rather, that there is a window there. Has it yet vanished? No!—yes!—not quite! And there is still the swarthy whiteness—we shall venture to marry these ill-agreeing words—the swarthy whiteness of Judge Pyncheon's face. The features are all gone; there is only the paleness of them left. And how looks it now? There is no window! There is no face! An infinite inscrutable blackness has annihilated sight! Where is our universe? All crumbled away from us; and we, adrift in chaos, may hearken to the gusts of homeless wind, that go sighing and murmuring about in quest of what was once a world!"

His Attitude toward Romance.

Hawthorne's romanticism, to turn from his style to the atmosphere which envelops tales and romances alike, is of a peculiar type, strangely linking the past with the present and the remote with the near. The German romantic movement, with its return to feudalism and mysticism, did not allure him. He never fell, as did Irving and Longfellow, under the enchantment of mediæval history and legend. True, he named his eldest daughter "Una", after Spenser's heroine, but only "to take the name out of the realm of Faëry." Certain old superstitions had a charm for him—witchcraft, for instance, and demonology; and his fancy was continually playing with the pseudo-science of alchemy. But these things were used only for their symbolism—he never took them seriously; he might have borrowed from Ariosto or Cervantes the suspicion of banter in his tone.

We might liken him to Brockden Brown, if Brown had not attempted to construct spiritual dramas out of such forced and mechanical situations. Or we might liken him to Poe, who was fully his equal in art, if only Poe had imported more of the human element into his eerie fancies. Two points of contact with those strange spirits he certainly had,—his proneness to psychological analysis, and his preference of that mysterious border land of human life which, if we may not call it the supernatural, we must yet call the preternatural.* He felt assured that there are more things in heaven and earth than were dreamed of in the philosophy of the utilitarians. The world of hard matter-of-fact, of cold calculation of daily needs, of supply and demand, of use, of convenience, of profit, was not the world to engage his fancy. We cannot imagine him making a novel out of a journalist's career or laying his scenes

*It is interesting to note that one of two poems which he appears to have written is in the measure and much in the spirit of Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. See Stedman's *American Anthology*.

in the wheat pit or the divorce court. The realists might have the real world and welcome; he preferred that twilight world of the fancy where objects take on all the strange shapes imaginable, and where, if beauty is not, we can still create it at will.

Both Idealist and Realist.

Yet his work, as has been hinted, is never without ground in actuality. He may see fantastic visions in the clouds, but his feet are always on the earth. He treads airily but securely. He was afraid of mysticism; he shied at transcendentalism, though caught for a time by one of its vagaries. Dreams were very fine, as dreams, but he soon saw the mistake of confounding them with reality—a lesson learned possibly at Brook Farm. At any rate, he came to know accurately the line that divides the ideal from the real. It is true there are many things in his tales that will not square with experience. Whoever reads for the first time *Feathertop*, or *Young Goodman Brown*, or *The Snow Image*, or *The Birth-Mark*, or *Rappaccini's Daughter*, is likely to rub his eyes to see if he is awake. Donatello's ears are a perpetual mystery. But we soon learn the symbolic intent of these wild fancies. Often, indeed, Hawthorne entirely rationalizes the fancies, or leaves them with but a faint suggestion of the miraculous. Maule's well turned bitter when a house was built over Maule's unquiet grave; but we are reminded that the sources might have been disturbed in digging the deep foundations. It is to such methods as this, of which our example is but one of a hundred, methods which Brown used so bunglingly, that Hawthorne owes his secure tread. However wide the excursion of his fancy, he is careful not to lose the way; and so he never loses even the most prosaic reader's confidence. This is his immense advantage over Poe.

A further proof of Hawthorne's foot-hold in actuality is to be found in some of his chosen themes and scenes. His love for nature never amounted to a passion, whether sentimental or

scientific, but he was acutely sensitive to the charms of outdoor life, as a dozen sympathetic sketches like *Buds and Bird Voices* and *The Old Manse* testify. He localizes strongly, too. His Old Manse stands in marked contrast to the Domain of Arnheim or the Landor's Cottage of Poe's dreams. Ethan Brand, we know, was, in spite of his diabolical laugh, a plain man who burned lime in the New England hills; but who was Roderick Usher and where did he dwell? The Great Stone Face may be seen to-day; who but Poe ever saw the Masquers of the Red Death? And there are the Town Pump and the Salem Custom House and the Catacombs of Rome. Assuredly, in its external features, this world of Hawthorne's romances is our world, though it must be admitted, too, that there is always something added or something taken away that makes it seem like another world. Of course there is idealization. We are not to suppose that Blithedale is an absolutely faithful picture of Brook Farm. Donatello the Faun bears little resemblance to Maurice Hewlett's Italians. And *The Scarlet Letter*, with its scene laid at the author's very door, reverts to the New England of the past, where the fancy can at need escape from the bounds of the actual. We readily perceive the difference when we pass from the prologue of the Custom House to the story proper. Yet *The Scarlet Letter* is a tale that by idealizing attains a more perfect verisimilitude than is ever attained by photographic realism, becoming, one must almost think, the final portrayal of Puritanism.

The characters of the stories, which are always few in number, may be best described as possessing precisely this same peculiarity of seeming at once real and unreal. They act normally and rationally. They move amid natural surroundings. They say "Good morning," and "Ah, I see," and "Shut the door." They are neither like the caricatures of Dickens nor like the impossible creatures of the old romances, who are always doing impossible things. But neither are

they like the characters of the realists; that is to say, they are not exactly the sort of people we have met or ever quite expect to meet. It is because, as we have seen, Hawthorne preferred to move in that border land of spiritual life where fancy and speculation will always run in advance of observation and knowledge. He does not shun the actual; he simply rejects a large part of the actions and motives that enter into every-day life as unsuited to his purpose, and allows his characters to be governed in every thought and deed by those principles of good or evil conduct which the ordinary man knows well enough, but of which he is most of the time scarcely conscious. There is in his characters so much of the truth of inner life that they seem to be untrue to outer life without really being so. One wonders how, shyly and aloof as he lived, he came to understand so well the heart of man. One is tempted to say that by some special dispensation he was given worldly wisdom without contact with the world. Contact he undoubtedly had in his unobtrusive way—in his walks through New England and in his Custom House and consular life. But it need not have been extensive; one experience would enrich him more than a dozen would enrich other men. His *Note Books*, the great key to his character, show this: his habit of noting and meditating made each single experience fruitful. His imagination, too, enabled him to learn as by divination. He did not need to fight a duel, his friend Cilley fell in a duel and he got the whole spiritual experience. We know that he had, however it was obtained, that admixture of worldliness so necessary to breadth of genius.

Yet catholic as were his sympathies, it was the darker phases of the interior drama that moved him when he came to write. Balzac wrote what he called the Human Comedy. Hawthorne's work, so much narrower in scope and so much more intense in its seizure of sin and sorrow, grappling with moral problems often to the exclusion of

The Shadow of Puritanism.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

HENRY DAVID THOREAU

EDGAR ALLAN POE

intellectual and æsthetic ones, might well be called the Human Tragedy. He has sometimes been described as morbid, but that is not the right word. His own tone and attitude are thoroughly healthy, though he does not always keep in the sunshine. There is a large leaven of humor in his work, and humor of the most genuine, spontaneous kind. It would be interesting, if we had space, to follow it through such a book as *The House of the Seven Gables*, from the early chapters where it bubbles genially over the little boy and his weakness for gingerbreads, to the final phases of its subdued yet pitiless play about the stricken Judge. Yet even there it only serves to throw the overhanging shadow of the book into darker relief. And Hawthorne knew it. He longed to write "a sunshiny book." It was not that he loved the gloom, as the term "morbid" would seem to imply, but only that he could not shut his eyes to it.

Beyond question, the one fact of life and the world which to Hawthorne looms larger than all others, is the fact of sin. This, too, is the Puritan inheritance, though he is so far emancipated as to see the sin of Puritanism itself, and in *The Scarlet Letter* the sin of Hester Prynne pales before the sin of her Puritan persecutors. But the shadows have only shifted —in one form or another the problem of evil holds for him an unconquerable fascination. In *Ethan Brand* he plays with the idea of the Unpardonable Sin, which he logically enough makes to be the continual barring out of good influences. In *The House of the Seven Gables* it is the problem of inherited evil tendencies, made into romance by the fiction of an ancestral curse. In *The Scarlet Letter* it is the sin of nature against conscience, offset by the sins of social and religious creed against nature, and complicated by the sins of hypocrisy and revenge. In *The Marble Faun* it is the old drama of the temptation and the fall of man. Yet these sombre themes are not used to morbid ends. Sin itself is clearly shown

to be educative, playing a useful part in the beneficent plan of the world. It does not, of course, lead to happiness, for the suffering and sorrow are necessary parts of the education; but we mark Hester Prynne's broadened and sweetened nature, and we know that Arthur Dimmesdale the innocent would never have attained to the spirituality of Arthur Dimmesdale the guilty. And Donatello, the happy, the ignorant, the child-like, the faun-like, loves, commits murder, and steps at once into the common human inheritance of knowledge and sorrow and hope. It is of such material as this that the world's great books are made.

His Art.

We have already spoken of Hawthorne's style. Let a final word be said of his art in its larger aspects. The secret of its greatness lies in the fact that it is not something added to the man, but that, however carefully cultivated, it is at bottom a genuine self-expression. When a Longfellow writes a poem like *Hiawatha* we admire the art, but we know it to be largely mechanical—a thing of much study and experiment. A Hawthorne writes as he must. It was one of Emerson's theories that worthy matter may safely be left to find its own form. Hawthorne wrote greatly and nobly because he felt greatly and nobly. He invested art with an almost religious sanctity. He could stoop to no tricks; he could not even try to meet the taste of the public. He envied Longfellow for his popularity, but he felt that he must go his own way even though he hardly knew where food for his family was to come from. Fame or popularity did not enter into his calculations. He was one more artist who, after Emerson's ideal, "wrought in a sad sincerity."

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE, 1812-1896

It would be in some degree an abuse of terms to include in a chapter on romance such distinctly moral and instructive tales as the once popular story of *The Lamplighter* (1853), by

Maria S. Cummins, of Salem, or the juvenile *Rollo* and *Lucy Books* which from 1830 onward Jacob Abbott, a Maine clergyman, used to turn out by the score. Nor is a history of literature imperatively called upon to take account of such as these. But they are at least interesting as showing the purposeful nature of the New England temperament—so purposeful that even its popular fiction, no less than its creations of a finer art, moved along sober lines to didactic ends. It is precisely this nature that was brought to the creation of a book which not only far transcended these and all other American novels in popularity, but which rose almost to the level of great literature. That book, of course, was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and its author was Harriet Beecher Stowe.

It is not to be understood that Mrs. Stowe wrote very consciously toward the end she served, but only that when she came to write she brought to the work all the moral conviction which arose from New England birth in a family of divines. As a matter of fact, her book was produced in a rather haphazard fashion. Her early married years were spent at Cincinnati, where she had some opportunities of becoming acquainted with Southern life, including the institution of slave-holding. It was later, in 1851, when she was living at Brunswick, Maine, where her husband was a professor in Bowdoin College, that she was asked by the editor of the Washington *National Era* to write for his paper a sketch of slave life. She wrote out and sent him the scene of "The Death of Uncle Tom." The attention which this sketch excited moved her to add other scenes, and in 1852 the entire novel, thus irregularly put together, was published. The sales ran at once into the hundreds of thousands, and the influence which the book had in helping to crystallize the slowly gathering sentiment against slave-holding is quite incalculable. The characters of Uncle Tom, Topsy, little Eva, Miss Ophelia, St. Clair, Marks, Legree, fixed themselves at once in the popular fancy as so many real persons.

Indeed, the book was in intent more a novel than a ro-

mance, for Mrs. Stowe aimed to set forth life as it really was. Readers of course made the mistake of assuming that all slavery was as bad as the one picture of it which she drew, and so she was often charged with exaggeration. But that she meant to be just, and that she was aiming, not at a section of people, but at a national crime, is shown by the fact that some of the best characters in the book are Southerners, while the brutal slave-driver is of the North. The story is deficient in many points of art, but it has the art of life—real people and real passions, humor, pathos, dramatic situation and action—and this, even apart from its political and social interest, would doubtless have carried it well into favor.

Yet the strength of the book on this point is scarcely sufficient to insure its future vitality. If the extent of a writer's audience and the measure of his immediate influence were the final tests, and not artistic excellence and the measure of his insight into the eternal verities of the human spirit, Mrs. Stowe would deserve to stand with the major novelists of her time. But the book to which her fame is inseparably bound grew out of a single social movement, and it will surely suffer the final eclipse that overtakes all such productions. The movement, as it chanced in this case, was of extraordinary significance, and the fate of the book is therefore indefinitely postponed, but already it has long been more like a historical document than a living force.

Mrs. Stowe continued to exercise her gift for drawing character, and some of her later stories—such sketches of New England village life, for instance, as *The Minister's Wooing* (1859) and *Oldtown Folks* (1869)—would in themselves give her a respectable place among writers of fiction. But these books are in no sense romances. With Mrs. Stowe's later work, indeed, those phases of romantic activity which it has been the purpose of the present chapter to set forth, are practically lost sight of, and the realistic novel of the post-bellum period begins to appear.

CHAPTER VI

THE TRANSCENDENTAL MOVEMENT.—EMERSON, THOREAU

There has been in American literature but one instance of anything like a conscious and organized intellectual "movement." The groups of writers we have thus far considered are groups made by the historian of literature who, looking back over the field, tries to bring men and events into some definite relations. Writers have been discussed together, not because they consciously worked together, but because they were contemporaries or because they chanced to possess similar traits. But about a decade before the middle of the nineteenth century a few men and women in New England, holding certain views of life and morals, made a deliberate attempt to unite for the defence and spread of their views; and though they never effected any organization that could be called a church, nor even established a permanent school of philosophy, they did make a strong impression upon the intellectual life of their time, and their theories had issue in a small but very vital body of literature. The history, therefore, of Transcendentalism—a ponderous but not unfitting name which these thinkers themselves imported from abroad and which, though it was often employed by others in ridicule, they always treated gravely—belongs peculiarly to the history of American literature.

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN NEW ENGLAND

In the theology of New England, Calvinism had for two centuries held its own almost unchallenged. But the spirit of revolution and free thought that, about 1800, was working

such changes in Europe, made itself felt also in America, and the sterner features of the religion of the Puritans had to give way before it. Many found it no longer possible to subscribe to the old doctrines, which taught, among other things, that human nature is totally depraved and that only certain "elect" are marked for salvation. They began to declare more liberal views, and their declarations rapidly crystallized into what is now familiarly known as Unitarianism. This was a form of faith which practically ignored all revelation outside of conscience, holding that man must look for guidance solely to the moral nature within, believing it to be good, and so between himself and the one God work out his salvation.

The new theology spread, if not far, at least so effectually that it was soon established at the Divinity School at Harvard and in many of the prominent churches in and about Boston. Its growth and influence were largely due to that great vindicator of personal character as against professed creed, Dr. William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), who was regarded through the thirty-odd years of his ministry at Boston as the most eloquent pulpit orator in America, and whose works are still held in high respect. Other prominent advocates were Theodore Parker (1810-1860), who gave to the cause his youthful zeal, and James Freeman Clarke (1810-1888), one of the foremost of the later Unitarians, both in the pulpit and in letters.

Of course, the old church was not overthrown. Congregationalism, though of a liberalized type, still prevailed in many parts of New England as it did elsewhere. And in Horace Bushnell (1802-1876), who preached at Hartford, and Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887), who preached at Brooklyn, Congregationalism had, through the middle of the century, exponents nearly or quite as distinguished as Channing. But though these two published as well as preached—Beecher even wrote

a novel—they scarcely concern us here. Neither Congregationalism nor Unitarianism, as such, produced anything in the nature of enduring literature, and their progress has been glanced at here only because it will assist to an understanding of the half-religious and half-philosophical Transcendental movement, which, as was said, does touch literature closely enough to demand our attention.

Into the precise origin of this movement we need not inquire. Doubtless the underlying philosophical ideas are older than Plato or Buddha, and were transmitted from the far East. The immediate impulse came from the philosophers of Germany, through many agents, conspicuously the English Coleridge and Carlyle. Beginning as a speculative philosophy only, it struck in New England upon very ardent moralists and very practical-minded men, among whom had already been sown the seeds of liberalism, and who, dissatisfied with their old forms and creeds, caught up this attractive philosophy and proceeded at once to erect it into a kind of gospel and guide of life. At the base of it lay what is called idealism—the reliance, as the word implies, upon ideas, or the world within, as the only sure testimony we can have of matter, or the world without. Transcendentalism (as understood in New England—not the Transcendentalism of the German Kant) meant the belief that within the mind are certain intuitions, or knowledge of truth and right, that *transcend*, that is to say, go beyond, are independent of, all experience. Whence these intuitions come we do not know; nor can we logically prove their validity—"truths which pertain to the soul cannot be proved by any external testimony whatsoever." We can only follow, with implicit trust, the "inner light." This, of course, is sheer individualism, the doctrine of the Unitarians pushed to its extreme, making every man his own moral guide and sweeping away at a blow all theological systems. It is therefore no matter for sur-

prise that many men, among them notably Theodore Parker, were carried completely outside of the Unitarian church.

The movement, however, was not of a nature to attract the masses. It differed from "The Great Awakening," that religious revival of a century earlier,* in being less sudden, less violent, and in every way more restricted. It differed radically, too, from the temperance and abolition movements of its own time, both of which owed much to it, in that these, being more definite "causes," could be fought out on the platform or by the people at the polls. Transcendentalism was a cult of the cultured, and the other classes scarcely knew of its existence. Yet, though stripped of emotional and popular elements, it was none the less a wave of sentiment and reform—a genuine quickening of spiritual life. It had a large element of religion in it. Nothing could lightly shake the moral earnestness of the New Englanders, deepened as it was by more than two centuries of persecutions, hardships, and wars. The Unitarianism that came to divide the old church was altogether reverent and serious. And when new doctrines came to burst even the wide bonds of Unitarianism, there was still never any thought of giving up the fundamental principles of morality and religion. Men concerned themselves no longer about special schemes of salvation. But they were all the more deeply concerned about right living and thinking; and the common definition of Transcendentalism as a doctrine of "plain living and high thinking," loose as it is, is by no means bad.

Some definite facts may serve to set the movement in a clearer light.

Some time in 1836 a little knot of men and women began to meet in Boston, drawn together by a common interest

* See page 30.

in matters that affected religion, and especially the condition of the Unitarian Church. This knot, though never definitely organized, came to be known in time as the Transcendental Club. Among those who took part in its meetings were Emerson, Alcott, Thoreau, the Ripleys, the Channings, Theodore Parker, James Freeman Clarke, George Bancroft, Hawthorne, Cranch, Jones Very, Margaret Fuller, Miss Elizabeth and Miss Sophia Peabody. In 1840 *The Dial*, a quarterly magazine, was established as the organ of the movement. For the first number Emerson wrote the introductory words, remarking upon what he called "the progress of a revolution" in the society of New England, and dedicating the magazine to all who were "united in a common love of truth and love of its work," who had "given in their several adherence to a new hope," and who had "signified a greater trust in the nature and resources of man than the laws or the popular opinions would well allow." The editorship was held by Margaret Fuller for two years and then passed to Emerson for two years more, when the paper died for lack of support. The numbers were freely given away or destroyed, so that to-day a complete file is exceedingly difficult to obtain. It contained much literature of high quality, notably Emerson's contributions, and also a great deal of mystical jargon.

Of the more practical outcomes of this new-world attempt to bring philosophy down from the heavens to the earth, the most famous was the Brook Farm experiment. In 1840 George Ripley, later known as a literary editor and critic, resigned from the ministry and purchased a farm at West Roxbury, Massachusetts, persuading a number of others to co-operate with him in establishing there an agricultural association. Their object was to see whether the brain and the hand could not be made to work advantageously together; whether the same individual might not be both thinker and worker, and thus find for himself a

simpler, freer, and happier life. They proposed also to conduct for the younger members a school in accordance with these Arcadian principles. The Transcendental Club had no direct part in Brook Farm ; most of the members of the club, indeed, were rather opposed to it. But Ripley and his dozen or more associates (Hawthorne, we have seen, was one, and Charles A. Dana, late of the *New York Sun*, another) moved to the farm in the spring of 1841 and set to work in high spirits. For several years the enterprise was conducted with some measure of success. Alcott, Emerson, Margaret Fuller, W. H. Channing, Cranch, Horace Greeley, were all occasional visitors, interested and sometimes sympathetic ; Higginson and Lowell also passed that way; George William Curtis was there as a student. But the experiment changed form, and ended, after a few more years, in failure.

Doubtless there were at this period, when reform was "in the air," many reformers who expected too much of human nature. They fancied that wonderful revolutions could be brought about in a day, as if a man could, by taking thought, add a cubit to his stature. And many of the methods proposed were extravagant in the extreme. Manual labor was all very well ; even a vegetarian diet might be tolerated ; but wherein lay the peculiar virtue of white garments, which Alcott insisted upon wearing ? "Some," says Lowell, in his essay on Thoreau, "had assurance of instant millennium so soon as hooks and eyes should be substituted for buttons." But in spite of mistakes and extravagances, and a host of beliefs and incidents that the pen of a Lowell could readily turn to ridicule, there was in Transcendentalism so much faith and nobility and unselfish endeavor, and New England life was so much a gainer from it, that it is impossible to regard it uncharitably.

The reformers spent their energies in various ways, as Parker in the pulpit, Ripley on the farm, Greeley and Dana

through the press; but for the most part their individual influences have long since been lost in the great current of human endeavor. A few worked in letters to scarcely more enduring fame. There was Amos Bronson Alcott (1799-1888), the reputed head of the movement, the originality of whose methods of teaching earned for him the title of "the American Pestalozzi," and who contributed to *The Dial* "Orphic Sayings" of oracular sound and unfathomable meaning. There was the ill-fated Margaret Fuller Ossoli (1810–1850), friend of Emerson and editor of *The Dial*, perhaps the one American woman of her day fitted by intellect and training to associate with the men of her set upon equal terms, but who lost her life in a shipwreck just when her powers, chiefly critical, were fully ripened. There were poets, too—William Ellery Channing, the younger (1818–), of Concord, the friend and elegiast of Thoreau, and Christopher Pearse Cranch (1813–1892), a landscape painter of Cambridge, translator of Vergil's *Aeneid* (1872), and author of the familiar lines:—

> "Thought is deeper than all speech,
> Feeling deeper than all thought."

Both of these were contributors to *The Dial*. Another poet, somewhat further removed from the Concord circle, was Jones Very, of Salem (1813–1880), a strange religious recluse and mystic, who wrote many poems and sonnets of a merit quite out of proportion to their slender fame. But these names all pale before the name of him in whom for us Transcendentalism virtually has its beginning and end, and mainly because of whom this history has been revived.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON, 1803-1882

Hawthorne inscribed on the walls of his tower-study at the Wayside, "There is no joy but calm," and the motto would have suited well most of that coterie of men whose dreams were

nurtured by the quiet Concord—the old Grass-ground or Meadow River—and in the Massachusetts town whose name means peace. It would have suited none better than Ralph Waldo Emerson, who, placid in temperament even beyond the others, lived always the simple life of the philosopher that he was. He was born at Boston, May 25, 1803. The blood of seven generations of clergymen ran in his veins. One of those clergymen, Peter Bulkeley, founded and named the town of Concord; another, William Emerson, was the builder of the Old Manse, and a patriot of the Revolution who preached to the minute-men. All were in their way heroic men. One prayed every night that no descendant of his might ever be rich; one gave away his wife's only pair of shoes to a woman who appeared at the door barefoot on a frosty morning.

Ralph Waldo himself was reared hardily. His father died when he was but eight years old, and his mother was forced to take in boarders. An aunt was once overheard consoling the children for want of food with "stories of heroic endurance." He and his brother had but one overcoat between them, and—hard lot for a New England boy—he never had a sled. Later in life he wrote glowingly of "the Angels of Toil and Want," and extolled "the iron band of poverty, the hoop that holds men staunch." At school he was quiet and studious, taking little interest in sports and making but moderate progress in his studies. It has been said of him that "he never had any talent for anything—nothing but pure genius;" and the genius was certainly slow to manifest itself. The hopes of the family centred in a younger and more brilliant brother, whose mind and body, however, broke early under their severer strain.

Youth.

He entered Harvard, mostly working his way, and taking his degree in 1821. For the next few years he taught, rather indifferently. One of his pupils was young Dana, and Emerson

wrote afterwards of *Two Years Before the Mast:* "Have you seen young Dana's book? Good as Robinson Crusoe, and all true. He was my scholar once, but he never learned this of me, more's the pity." At this stage Emerson was ambitious to become a pulpit orator, but he was growing more and more dissatisfied with himself, feeling that his abilities were in no direction adequate to his ambitions. The reasoning faculty seemed to be denied him, and its place was but ill supplied by imagination and a keen relish for poetry. He called himself an intellectual saunterer, "sinfully strolling from book to book, from care to idleness." Fortunately, he was a stroller, too, in another sense; he more than once declared that nothing yielded him so much pleasure as to steal away over the meadows and through the bushes, "picking blueberries and other trash of the woods, far from fame behind the birch trees." And he adds—a strange commentary upon the attitude of his fellows toward nature—: "I do not think I know a creature who has the same humor, or would think it respectable." He had to "slink" away. One of his earliest poems, the familiar "Good-bye, proud world! I'm going home," was written at the time when, toward the end of his school-teaching, he went with his mother to her new home in the wooded seclusion of Canterbury Lane, where for a time he sought to put himself "on a footing of old acquaintance with Nature, as a poet should."

At School.

The teaching paved the way to a course in Divinity, which followed. After several interruptions caused by a weak chest, which drove him once to South Carolina and Florida, Emerson was licensed to preach, and in 1829 was ordained minister of the Second Church of Boston, the old North Church of Cotton Mather. In the same year he married, but his wife died within eighteen months. His relations with the people of his church were most cordial and his future

In the Church.

looked bright, if not exactly brilliant. But certain conscientious scruples, which had all along troubled him, would not let him rest. Even the slight formalism of his church, already liberalized beyond Cotton Mather's most uneasy dreams, he found too great. Forms seemed to stand between him and pure religion. To administer the Lord's Supper while regarding it as an obsolete rite, perhaps worse than useless, seemed, to one of his sincere mind, a kind of sacrilege. In 1832 he withdrew from his charge. His friends feared that he was mentally deranged. He was following an inner light that had not yet shone clearly enough for them to see. Meanwhile, he went to Europe, not for art or scenery, but to meet men,—Coleridge, Landor, Wordsworth, above all Carlyle, another man maturing slowly and still misunderstood and almost unknown. He spent an evening of quiet thought with Carlyle at his lonely Craigenputtock home, and the next morning Carlyle watched him mount the hill and "vanish like an angel." Two obscure men of genius had met and recognized each other. Several years later Emerson introduced Carlyle's great scare-book, *Sartor Resartus*, to American readers while English readers were still looking askance. The two never afterward lost touch, and their lifelong correspondence makes a book of rare interest.

At Concord.

The year 1835 found Emerson living with his mother in the Old Manse at Concord, meditating and writing, rather aimlessly, as Hawthorne was doing at Salem. He soon married again, and buying a house of his own, settled in Concord for the rest of his life. At the second centennial anniversary of the town, in 1835, he delivered an address, and on the anniversary of the battle of Lexington, April 19, 1836, at the completion of the Battle Monument, was sung his now famous hymn:—

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,

Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world."

His mornings were spent in the study, his afternoons in walking or gardening. He did some lecturing at Boston and elsewhere. For the rest, his half idyllic life suited him, and he indulged his rural fancy by buying several tracts of woodland on the shores of Walden Pond.

In the year and the month in which the Transcendental Club came into being, September, 1836, Emerson published his first book, the slow growth of three years or more. *Nature*, he entitled it, showing already his liking for brief titles, which allow the widest latitude of treatment. It was but a small book, as space-measurements go—eight short chapters, that would have made one good lecture in all. But almost every sentence had the weight of a lecture. "Nature always wears the colors of the spirit." "The eye is the best of artists." "Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue." "Every natural action is graceful." "A work of art is an abstract or epitome of the world." "All things are moral." "A man is a god in ruins." "It is a sufficient account of that appearance we call the world that God will [*i. e.*, wills to] teach a human mind, and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade." "Build, therefore, your own world." It is readily seen that this was a declaration of the idealistic philosophy, or rather faith. External nature is conceived of as none other than God apparent, God making himself manifest. There is little philosophical reasoning, but mainly broad, frank, confident statement. Whoever shall try to analyze the book for logical coherence of thought will be sadly puzzled. "I cannot argue," Emerson would say, "I only know." He distrusted reasoning, and lived and thought by his creed, "Revere your intuitions." And this, as we have seen, is the sub-

stance of Transcendentalism. *Nature*, which joined to its mysticism genuine insight, was the foremost document of the new movement, and though the little tract did not circulate widely, it went deep. Those who could not sympathize with its philosophy could at least feel its poetic beauty :—

"I see the spectacle of morning from the hilltop over against my house from daybreak to sunrise, with emotions which an angel might share. The long, slender bars of cloud float like fishes in the sea of crimson light. From the earth, as a shore, I look out into the silent sea. I seem to partake its rapid transformations; the active enchantment reaches my dust, and I dilate and conspire with the morning wind. How does Nature deify us with a few and cheap elements! Give me health and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous. The dawn is my Assyria; the sunset and moonrise my Paphos, and unimaginable realms of faërie; broad noon shall be my England of the senses and the understanding; the night shall be my Germany of mystic philosophy and dreams."

A Lecturer.

The next year, 1837, Emerson delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, at Cambridge, his address on *The American Scholar*—"an event," Lowell declared, in his essay on Thoreau, "without any former parallel in our literary annals." To this high praise of Lowell's may be added the testimony of Holmes, who called the address "our intellectual Declaration of Independence." Certainly, one who would know Emerson at his best can do no better than turn to this second great confession of his faith and read it through. Even extracts show its dominant note to be inspiring individuality:—

"Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands, draws to a close. The millions that around us are rushing into life, cannot always be fed on the sere remains of foreign harvests. Events, actions arise, that must be sung, that will sing themselves. Who can doubt that poetry will revive and lead in a new age, as the star in the constellation Harp, which now flames in our zenith, astronomers announce, shall one day be the pole-star for a thousand years? . . .

"The old fable concerns a doctrine ever new and sublime; that there is One Man, present to all particular men only partially, or through one faculty; and that you must take the whole society to find the whole man. Man is not a farmer, or a professor, or an engineer, but he is all. Man is priest, and scholar, and statesman, and producer, and soldier. In the *divided* or social state these functions are parcelled out to individuals, each of whom aims to do his stint of the joint work, whilst each other performs his. . . . In this distribution of functions the scholar is the delegated intellect. In the right state he is *Man Thinking*. In the degenerate state, when the victim of society, he tends to become a mere thinker, or still worse, the parrot of other men's thinking. . . .

"Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is the active soul. . . . In its essence it is progressive. The book, the college, the school of art, the institution of any kind, stop with some past utterance of genius. This is good, say they,—let us hold by this. They pin me down. They look backward and not forward. But genius looks forward: the eyes of man are set in his forehead, not in his hindhead: man hopes: genius creates. . . . Man Thinking must not be subdued by his instruments. Books are for the scholar's idle times. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings. . . .

"In self-trust all the virtues are comprehended. Free should the scholar be,—free and brave. . . . The man has never lived that can feed us ever. The human mind cannot be enshrined in a person who shall set a barrier on any side to this unbounded, unboundable empire. It is one central fire, which, flaming now out of the lips of Ætna, lightens the Capes of Sicily, and now out of the throat of Vesuvius, illuminates the towers and vineyards of Naples. It is one light which beams out of a thousand stars. It is one soul which animates all men."

An address, delivered the next year before the Divinity class at Cambridge, helped to fix the impression that a new leader had arisen, though even then few realized what a revolution he was

leading. Emerson's manner was so quiet, his ideals were so lofty, and his faith was so serene, that he won his way almost unopposed. Holmes said that he was "an iconoclast without a hammer, who took down our idols from their pedestals so tenderly that it seemed like an act of worship." His first volume of *Essays* was published in 1841; and to-day there are few readers who do not know something of "History," "Self-Reliance," "Compensation," "Heroism," or "The Over-Soul." The second series, of a more practical, less seer-like nature—"Character," "Manners," "Gifts," "Politics,"—followed in 1844. This was the period of his editorship of *The Dial*. Then came *Poems*, in 1847; *Representative Men* (lectures delivered in 1845, a kind of complement to Carlyle's *Heroes*), in 1850; *English Traits*, 1856; *The Conduct of Life*, 1860; *May-Day and Other Pieces* (poems), 1867; *Society and Solitude*, 1870. Meanwhile, he carried on his lecturing in the East, went to England and lectured in 1847, and between 1850 and 1870, during the flourishing period of the "Lyceum" or Lecture Bureau system, made regular winter tours as far west as the Mississippi. Indeed, his early Boston lectures marked almost the beginning of that system which grew in this country to such great proportions, carrying into nearly every village of the North the best products of the country's culture through speakers of such eminent worth as Emerson, Everett, Phillips, Gough, Beecher, Holmes, Agassiz, Taylor, and Curtis.

A Sage.

By 1870 Emerson's work was nearly done. He was accepted everywhere as one of those rare and essentially great men who, by simply being themselves and uttering what they feel, show what a gulf of superiority is fixed between them and all who strive and climb. He was something more than lecturer, or essayist, or poet; he was the "Sage of Concord," whom all delighted to honor. When his house burned, in 1872, his friends sent him off to Europe

and Egypt and rebuilt the house. People would still insist upon hearing him speak, though he but repeated old speeches. His mind was clear, but his memory and vitality were both failing. "My memory hides itself," he would say. He read as late as 1881 before the Concord School of Philosophy. He attended Longfellow's funeral in February, 1882, but, it is said, could not recall Longfellow's name. His own death came a month later; and he was buried near Hawthorne and Thoreau in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, on the pine ridge where a piece of unhewn granite marks his grave.

Philosophy.

It has been said that Emerson spent his life in teaching one thing—a statement, indeed, that will hold of most great teachers, but of none more literally. In Emerson's doctrine of the transcendent value of the inner revelation is to be found the key to his life and thought. It explains, for example, his attitude toward science and nature. Nature without is as nature within, and, in his conception, is but an infinite variation of the lesson of beauty and order that the Great Spirit will have us learn. He cared nothing for details. Details, he said, are melancholy. The large significance is the main thing. And the smallest life includes all: understand one, you understand all. "Who telleth one of my meanings," says the Sphinx, "is master of all I am." Thus all things in life are unified, and everything, down to the humblest organism and the humblest occupation, is glorified. Hence, too, the doctrine of self-reliance, which is only intuitionalism and individualism in other words. This doctrine he carried so far that he distrusted all concerted efforts for the betterment of society. He rejected Ripley's invitation to join in the Brook Farm experiment. "At the name of a society all my repulsions play, all my quills rise and sharpen." What was the need of men standing together when they could stand alone? He was stirring up a nation's

moral heroism by giving to each man the courage of his opinion.

We talk of disciples of this man or that, but "a disciple of Emerson" would be a contradiction of terms. For Emerson's very teaching frees the pupil from allegiance. He never said, "Follow me," but, in effect, "Follow the divinity within yourself, rely on your part in the Over-Soul. Never mind dogmas or other men's opinions; never mind appearances; never mind the conclusions of logic;—simply do what you feel to be right. If you will accept the place that Providence has given you, living your own life without envy or self-effacing imitation, all will be well." A noble philosophy indeed for the inherently noble, though one is often made to feel that its serene assurance does not take a sufficient account of sin and the weakness of unaided human nature.

His Style.

The style in which Emerson wrote was of a piece with his substance. It is best described as oracular. Its want of sequence, which puts it in strong contrast, for example, to a style like De Quincey's or Newman's, arises naturally, since Emerson did not arrive at truth by subtle reasoning but simply gave forth the ideas as they came to him, in the tersest form. It is almost literally true that some of his essays can be read backward as well as forward. The relation between two sentences may sometimes be discovered by supplying the right connective, but more often there is no close relation. If a paragraph or sentence should fall out of one of his books, no one could tell where to replace it. He was in the habit of selecting a subject for a lecture and then throwing together from his note books all the scraps he could find that bore on the subject. Thus the relation of parts is not like that of the links of a chain, but more like that of the spokes of a wheel, which radiate from a central hub. Yet through all there is such a singleness of manner and personality that we are scarce-

ly aware, as in so many writers of detached thoughts, of any lack of constructiveness. The sentences are short and well turned, the words direct, strong, and often homely, the figures original and quaint, with a play of humor always just beneath the surface. He is the most quotable writer since Bacon. His epigrams are a constant stimulus, his aphorisms a constant satisfaction. He takes particular delight in the paradoxical, often finding the greater truth in inversion. "Books are for the scholar's idle times." "The highest price you can pay for a thing is to ask it." "The borrower runs in his own debt." "Our strength grows out of our weakness." "We are wiser than we know." This is Poor Richard spiritualized at last.

His Poetry.

We have said too little of Emerson's poetry. In essence a poet, and in methods a seer, he should have spoken in the language of seers. And at times he did so speak, with rare effect. He was happier than Carlyle in having some gift of song. But the gift was partial only. He had a good ear for melody but not for the higher harmonies of verse. In his poetry lame lines and imperfect rhymes are frequent. Perhaps he followed too implicitly his own theory that truth, uttered under conviction, would find its own perfect form. He fell most naturally into the simplest of metres, the four-foot couplet, and some of his best thoughts found their final expression in this form.

There are two notable qualities in Emerson's poetry,—the half-mystical philosophy of which he oftentimes made it the voice, and the love of nature which we have seen to be so intimate a part of the man. Among the poems embodying the former quality, the best are *The Sphinx*, *The Problem*, *Uriel*, *Alphonso of Castile*, *Merlin*, *Saadi*, *Brahma*. But philosophy rarely makes so good poetry as do simple perception of beauty and the emotions which beauty stirs. Emerson as a philosopher-poet must fall below Lucretius or even below old Omar Khay-

yam, but Emerson as a poet of nature has not many superiors. Take some of his most ragged lines—the song of the pine in *Woodnotes:*—

"Heed the old oracles,
Ponder my spells;
Song wakes in my pinnacles
When the wind swells.
Soundeth the prophetic wind,
The shadows shake on the rock behind,
And the countless leaves of the pine are strings
Tuned to the lay the wood-god sings.
Harken! Harken!
If thou wouldst know the mystic song
Chanted when the sphere was young."

This is pure lyric rapture, uncontainable melody, born of a heart that beats in tune with the heart of mother Earth. And there is much more as good, or better, in the joyful preludings of *May-Day*, or the proud boasts of Monadnoc, "mountain strong" and "grand affirmer of the present tense," scorner of the little men who daily climb his side, yet patient waiter for the poet who in large thoughts shall "string him like a bead." Read also *Each and All*, *Rhodora*, *The Humble-Bee*, *The Snow-Storm*, *Days*, *The Titmouse*, *Two Rivers*. The poem of *The Humble-Bee* seems almost to shine, so saturated is it with the heat and light of summer. But even in these poems the philosopher is rarely out of sight. Behind the phenomena of nature are always the deep meanings meant to be revealed, —"always," says Mr. Stedman, "the idea of Soul, central and pervading, of which Nature's forms are but the created symbols."

There is one poem, the *Threnody*, that is almost too sacred to be handled critically, since grief has its own rhythm, and broken utterance obeys a higher law than art's. Emerson's boy Waldo,—

"The hyacinthine boy, for whom
Morn well might break and April bloom,"—

died at the age of five. That memory at least never left the man, who almost the last thing before he died, forty years afterward, said, "Oh, that beautiful boy!" The *Threnody* croons through the first stages of sorrow, the sense of mere loss and aching memories, —

"The painted sled stands where it stood,
The kennel by the corded wood;"

bursts suddenly into passionate protest against Nature; grows calm again with consolation; and then rises to the highest note of all—the seer-like vision and the deep Heart's utterance:—

"When frail Nature can no more,
Then the Spirit strikes the hour:
My servant Death, with solving rite,
Pours finite into infinite.
Wilt thou freeze love's tidal flow,
Whose streams through nature circling go?
Nail the wild star to its track
On the half-climbed zodiac?
Light is light which radiates,
Blood is blood which circulates,
Life is life which generates,
And many seeming life is one,—
Wilt thou transfix and make it none?"

Then comes the confident close, voicing the verdict of the faith of centuries:—

"What is excellent
As God lives, is permanent;
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;
Heart's love will meet thee again."

It is doubtful if there be a more exalted strain than this in American poetry.

There have been several attempts of late to revalue Emer-

son and his work, and the tendency is to abate much of the former high estimate. It is a critical tendency, very natural in a day when the philosophy of experience has the vogue. But Emerson's books continue to sell, and there is little reason to doubt that people are reading them with ever fresh delight and inspiration. By their unflinching optimism they keep a strong hold. Emerson was a sage, but a sage for youth. Youth is our perennial idealist, and young readers find in his work precisely the faith and cheer that keep courage and nobility alive in the world. Besides, even if the time should come when Emerson shall be no longer actually needed, it seems impossible that he should be forgotten. His service to his own day was too great. By his call to independence and intellectual honesty at a time when Americans were intellectually subservient, he set New England, and through New England, America, finally free. He went himself straight to the fountain-heads of wisdom and inspiration —to Plato, Confucius, Christ; but even them he treated as brothers, not as masters. For he was no more to be intoxicated by the wine of other men's truth than he was to be caught by the glitter of falsehood and sham. Calm, sane, self-centred, undistempered by enthusiasms, on the one hand bowing to no popular idol, on the other standing his ground with our common humanity when many apostles of the Transcendental faith were swept off their feet, he was just such a man as is needed in an age of shifting faith and widening knowledge, —a man to proclaim anew the sanctity of the individual conscience and to declare that things are not in the saddle, but that men are still masters of their fate.

Security of his Fame.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU, 1817-1862

To call Thoreau a Transcendentalist would be somewhat misleading. His place in this chapter is determined by the fact that his lot was cast among the Concord thinkers—he was the only

one of note born at Concord—who made the new philosophy such a potent factor in New England thought and life. He came to manhood precisely at the time when the doctrines were taking definite shape, and it was impossible that he should not come somewhat under their influence. His relations, too, with Emerson were very close; but he was severely independent, both as man and as thinker, and, apart from an occasional visit to the meetings of the Transcendental Club and a few contributions to *The Dial*, he was scarcely to be regarded as one of the circle. He was, indeed, a philosopher after Emerson's own heart, living sturdily the doctrine that Emerson preached, and going steadily his self-appointed way. Often puzzling and sometimes repelling, yet always fresh and stimulating, he is one of the most interesting figures in our literary history.

Life.

On his mother's side Thoreau was of old New England stock, and he is said to have drawn most of his traits from that side. His name shows his French extraction. His paternal grandfather came to America from the island of Jersey just before the Revolutionary War. His grandmother bore the good Scotch name of Burns. His father was a pencil-maker, a small, plain, deaf, unobtrusive man. Henry was born in 1817 (the year Emerson entered college) and he spent at Concord nearly all of the forty-five years of his life. As a boy he drove his mother's cow to pasture, as Emerson had done at Boston. He learned the family trade of pencil-making, but abandoned it when he became proficient, not desiring to do again what he had done once. We are reminded of Carlyle's undertaking law because of the difficulty of succeeding in it, and then abandoning it because it offered no reward but money. Later, however, Thoreau did sometimes help his father in his business, which grew to be mainly the preparation of plumbago for electrotyping. He was graduated from Harvard at the age of twenty, accomplished, as

scholarship went, in rhetoric, Latin, Greek, and mathematics. After graduation he was school-teacher, lecturer, surveyor, pencilmaker, farmer, and recluse, by turns. His biography from twenty to twenty-four he condensed into the following notes: "Kept town school a fortnight; began the big Red Journal, October, 1837; found my first arrow-head; wrote a lecture (my first) on 'Society,' March 14, 1838, and read it before the Lyceum; went to Maine for a school in May, 1838; commenced school in the Parkham house in the summer of that year; wrote an essay on 'Sound and Silence,' December, 1838; fall of 1839, up the Merrimac to the White Mountains; the Red Journal, of 596 pages, ended June, 1840; Journal of 396 pages ended January 31, 1841."

It was a life in which the picking up of an arrow-head or the discovery of a richer blueberry patch were events, and the election of a new President but an incident. He lived two or three years in the house of Emerson as mechanic, gardener, and companion of Emerson's children; spent six months at Staten Island as tutor to the children of Emerson's brother William; traversed the length of Cape Cod on foot; and made various expeditions to the Maine woods and Canada. His two years' retreat at Walden, through which he became famous, was only in keeping with the general tenor of his life. The man, whose first lecture was upon the subject of "Society," always lived on the outskirts of society or avoided it altogether. Walden Pond is a small lake in the Walden woods, one mile south of Concord. There, in the spring of 1845, on a piece of Emerson's woodland, Thoreau built a hut, cutting the timbers for it with an ax which he borrowed from Mr. Alcott, and which he returned, he boasted, sharper than he received it. This cabin he made his home for the next two years. Brook Farm was a social experiment; Thoreau's might be called an unsocial one. He was not, however, turning his

back on family and friends, whom he often visited, but only gratifying his love of wild ways, and putting into practice some of his ideas about economy and simplicity of living. He says himself: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." He found in this seclusion full opportunity to do the two things he cared most about—observe and enjoy nature, and reflect upon the ways of men. The expenses of a year's living of this sort he could meet by working about six weeks. The rest of the time was free for rambling, studying, and writing. Thus was written most of his book, *Walden*, which, however, he did not succeed in getting published until 1854. Before that he published *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers* (1849), the outcome of an expedition made with his elder brother shortly after he left college. The larger part of the edition—some seven hundred copies—he had to store in his garret. These two were the only books published during his lifetime. He returned to civilization after his two years' experiment, but continued his explorations a-field, and died in 1862, in some measure the victim of the hardships which his gypsy instincts were constantly leading him to suffer. He died bravely, declaring, as he had declared when he faced life at twenty-four, that he "loved his fate to the very core and rind." His too early loss was fittingly mourned in more than one tender lament by his friend, Ellery Channing, like himself a passionate nature-lover:—

"The swallow is flying over,
But he will not come to me;
He flits, my daring rover,
From land to land, from sea to sea:
Where hot Bermuda's reef
Its barrier lifts to fortify the shore,
Above the surf's wild roar

He darts as swiftly o'er,—
But he who heard his cry of spring
Hears that no more, heeds not his wing."

Thoreau is scarcely to be estimated as other men, from whom he stands so far apart in almost all respects. He was a riddle even to those who knew him well. Hawthorne wrote in his journal: "Mr. Thoreau dined with us. He is a singular character—a young man with much of wild, original nature still remaining in him. He is as ugly as sin—long nosed, queer-mouthed, and with uncouth and somewhat rustic, though courteous manners. But his ugliness is of an honest and agreeable fashion, and becomes him much better than beauty." Mrs. Hawthorne, after hearing him lecture, wrote: "Mr. Thoreau has risen above all his arrogance of manner, and is as gentle, simple, ruddy, and meek as all geniuses should be; and now his great blue eyes fairly outshine and put into shade a nose which I once thought must make him uncomely forever." To Rose Hawthorne Lathrop he seemed "sad as a pinetree," though to the few friends to whom he warmed he was all sunshine, and he could both sing and dance, and would play with kittens by the half hour. His unbending nature brought him much criticism which a little compliance or a little explanation might have saved him. A schoolmate who knew him for a good whittler once asked him to make a bow and arrow, but he refused without giving the reason—that he had no knife. On another occasion he was accused of stealing a knife. He could easily have proved his absence at the time, but he preferred merely to make denial, letting his companions suspect what they pleased. It is hard to tell whether he simply disliked ordinary social intercourse or whether he feared it. The woods meant to him freedom, and he was like the muskrat, which, he said, "will gnaw its third leg off to be free." He was constantly tempted

Character.

to climb over a back fence and go across lots rather than run the gantlet of the houses fronting each other on the street. Men of convivial natures, like Lowell or Stevenson, are repelled by such an ascetic spirit, and are likely to prove unsympathetic critics. It requires the unruffled tolerance of an Emerson to see all of his good points and none of his bad; and his habit of contradiction made even Emerson say, "Thoreau is, with difficulty, sweet."

But Emerson and a few others, like Ellery Channing, learned to make the right allowances. Many of his declarations were only half-truth, and much of his profession was bravado. "Blessed are they," he would say, "who never read men's affairs, for they shall see nature, and, through her, God." Yet he took a keen interest in society at large and even in politics, and he could take an active part when he was sufficiently aroused. He went to jail rather than pay his tax, when he felt that the tax was supporting a government that supported slavery. It was his way of protesting against a great wrong; and when Emerson looked into his cell and said, "Henry, why are you here?" his reply was, "Why are you not here?" He met John Brown in 1857, and two years later, after the capture of Brown and before his execution, he spoke out boldly in his defence at Concord, Worcester, and Boston. It is unfortunate that Lowell should have found in such a man so much imitation, indolence, and selfishness, and so little else.

Philosophy.

Not many of us will care to accept the philosophy of *Walden*, so extreme is it, and, on the outside, so bitter, though with much sweetness at the core. Every thoughtful man must see much in our civilization to deplore, but if he be right-minded he will give helpful and not destructive criticism. We shall not remedy the faults by going back to barbarism. It is easy to corner Thoreau in an argument. He was always afraid he should die without having

lived; and, according to his own definition, that a man is rich in proportion to the number of things he can get along without, he certainly lived like a baron. But his method of living deep and "sucking out all the marrow of life" by going back to nature and the barest terms of existence, involved as much loss as gain. You can get along without a plow if you recognize no social obligations and have no wife or children to feed. You can get along without a hoe if you are willing to live on cow-parsnips. But it is the better teaching of civilization to get along *with* as many things as possible. "Why newspapers, and post-offices, and railroads?" asks Thoreau. But why, then, even an ax, since the beavers used their teeth? The ax and the railroad alike represent expedition and expediency. There is a poetic view, too. Thoreau protested against so much hammering of stone, but Emerson celebrated the beauty of man's achievements as being one with the beauty of nature's :—

> "Earth proudly wears the Parthenon
> As the best gem upon her zone,
> And Morning opes with haste her lids
> To gaze upon the pyramids."

But we soon learn that Thoreau is deliberately exaggerating, partly for the love of it, though mostly to drive home a truth. The thing for us to do is to read him intelligently, with fair, open minds, not accepting everything, but picking out the grains of truth, and taking innocent pleasure meanwhile in watching the chaff of wit and cynicism fly. There is a characteristic passage in *Walden*, for example, upon the "sleepers" that support the rails in the bed of a railroad, each one of which, Thoreau says, is a man—an Irishman, or a Yankee man. He is thinking of the workmen whose lives have gone into such labor. "And when they run over a man who is walking in his sleep, a supernumerary sleeper in the wrong position, and wake him up, they

suddenly stop the cars, and make a hue and cry about it, as if this were an exception." This is very clever, but very illogical. The laborer's life is not sacrificed to his labor. Action is the law of being, and a man lives the longer and the better for working. Yet the general meaning of the passage is clear, and also true, — that industrialism tends to kill the spirit. Much, indeed, lies in knowing how to read Thoreau. His philosophy is more of a curiosity than a creed to be adopted; yet many of his ideas hold much truth, and only need sensible modification to be applied to life.

Thus prepared, we can read safely and with amusement the sharpest passages of *Walden*:—

"I would observe, by the way, that it costs me nothing for curtains, for I have no gazers to shut out but the sun and moon, and I am willing that they should look in. The moon will not sour milk nor taint meat of mine, nor will the sun injure my furniture or fade my carpet; and if he is sometimes too warm a friend, I find it still better economy to retreat behind some curtain nature has provided than to add a single item to the details of housekeeping. A lady once offered me a mat, but as I had no room to spare within the house, nor time to spare within or without to shake it, I declined it, preferring to wipe my feet on the sod before my door. It is best to avoid the beginnings of evil.

"Not long since I was present at the auction of a deacon's effects, for his life had not been ineffectual:—

'The evil that men do lives after them.'

As usual, a great proportion was trumpery which had begun to accumulate in his father's day. Among the rest was a dried tape-worm. And now, after lying half a century in his garret and other dust-holes, these things were not burned; instead of a bonfire, or purifying destruction of them, there was an auction, or increasing of them. The neighbors eagerly collected to view them, and carefully transported them to their garrets and dust-holes, to lie there until their estates are settled, when they will start again. When a man dies he kicks the dust."

What is all this but teaching in a quaint way what Lowell

taught in *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, that "bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking" and forget that "heaven is given away"? Thoreau himself says: "Superfluous wealth can buy superfluities only. Money is not required to buy one necessary of the soul." And the whole gospel of *Walden* might almost be reduced to the formula, 'Simplify your life and elevate your thoughts;' for everywhere, in one form or another, beneath all the eccentricity and exaggeration, that gospel can be read.

His Style.

The foregoing passage will serve also to illustrate Thoreau's style. We scarcely think of him as a humorist, yet there is nearly always some humor lurking behind his cynicism, scarcely the less enjoyable for the tinge of bitterness. His best aphorisms are likely to have a humorous twist: "Some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in milk." The force of the style is also noteworthy; the paragraphs above end with an almost startling abruptness. Indeed, few philosophers, if we may dignify Thoreau with the term, have written more forcibly—with more terseness, directness, and concreteness of imagery. He was a past master in the art of putting things. Emerson praises him for a better rhetorician than himself: "I find the same thoughts, the same spirit that is in me, but he takes a step beyond and illustrates by excellent images that which I should have conveyed in a sleepy generalization." And so it is. "Trust thyself," says Emerson: "every heart vibrates to that iron string." Says Thoreau: "The head monkey at Paris puts on a traveller's cap, and all the monkeys in America do the same." Here is the same thought, the same lesson, only Thoreau, instead of encouraging us to independence, ridicules our conformity, and does it with a force and concreteness that go quite beyond Emerson's. But of course the quiet strength of Emerson is more effective in the end.

The parts of Thoreau's work upon which his fame rests most

securely to-day are his nature studies. He may have boasted over-much of his love for nature and unduly taunted other men for their indifference, but his own steadfast and reverent love is beyond question. He was a veritable faun, sealed from birth of the most ancient order of Nature's woodmen. Cities he dreaded like a Bedouin's camel, and he was nowhere so happy in Boston as at the railway station waiting for the cars to take him away. "There is in my nature, methinks, a singular yearning toward all wildness." He was prouder to have a sparrow alight on his shoulder than he would have been to wear an epaulet. He prized much less his accomplishments in Greek and Latin than his ability to find his way through the woods in the darkest night, to take a fish from the water with his hand, to eat a wild crab-apple without making a wry face. Agassiz, for whom he made collections of fishes, praised his sagacity. His attitude toward nature, however, was the poet's rather than the naturalist's. He was lured by the charm of her variety and mystery, and cared more to feel than to know. And his wide reading of the best literature only, his command of language, and his imagination, gave him a power to interpret his feelings that is rare among men of his stamp. It is interesting to note how inevitably he passes from observation to sympathy:—

A "Poet Naturalist."

"Shad are still taken in the basin of Concord River at Lowell, where they are said to be a month earlier than the Merrimac shad, on account of the warmth of the water. Still patiently, almost pathetically, with instinct not to be discouraged, not to be *reasoned* with, revisiting their old haunts, as if their stern fates would relent, and still met by the Corporation with its dam. Poor shad! where is thy redress? When Nature gave thee instinct, gave she thee the heart to bear thy fate? Still wandering the sea in thy scaly armour to inquire humbly at the mouths of rivers if man has perchance left them free for thee to enter."

Poetry reveals itself everywhere in his phrasing. The haze is "the sun's dust of travel." The ice of the pond "whoops" on a winter's night. Toadstools are "round-tables of the swamp gods." Some taller mast of pine rises in the midst of the woods "like a pagoda." The crowing of the wild Indian pheasant would "put nations on the alert." Moreover, there are records of sounds and visions that none but a poet could hear or see:—

"The winds which passed over my dwelling were such as sweep over the ridges of mountains, bearing the broken strains, or celestial parts only, of terrestrial music. The morning wind forever blows, the poem of creation is uninterrupted; but few are the ears that hear it. Olympus is but the outside of the earth everywhere."

"Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars."

Sometimes he runs into rhyme and becomes a poet confessed; and though his verse, as such, is very erratic, his delicate lines on *Smoke*, —

> "Light winged smoke, Icarian bird!
> Melting thy pinions in thy upward flight,
> Lark without song, and messenger of dawn,"—

are worth all the praise they have received.

In the four years immediately following Thoreau's death five books were published from the mass of manuscript which he left—*Excursions*, *The Maine Woods*, *Cape Cod*, *Letters*, and *A Yankee in Canada*. To these of late years have been added five more—*Spring*, *Summer*, etc. They give him a very dignified place in the library and assure him of a permanence of which he little dreamed. In his own day, when the polished N. P. Willis of New York was a favorite among the younger writers, few knew his name and none would

have ventured to prophesy for him any place in American letters. But time has slowly reversed the verdict. Willis's little light is flickering, Thoreau's begins to burn with the steadiness of a fixed star. The day is past, too, for the criticism that he was only a reflection of Emerson. Each owed something to the other, and doubtless Thoreau's debt was the greater, for he was the younger man and his was the inferior mind. But the difference between them was greater than the likeness. Emerson's books belong on those shelves where we put the philosophical works of Plato, Marcus Aurelius, Montaigne, and Bacon. Thoreau's belong with that group of more modest classics of the forest and field that gather about White's *Selborne* and Walton's *Complete Angler*.

CHAPTER VII

NATIONAL LIFE AND CULTURE.—LONGFELLOW, WHITTIER, LOWELL, HOLMES, WHITMAN

Of the period of our literature now under consideration—the prolific middle of the nineteenth century—four or five major writers and countless minor ones still remain to be treated. Placing them here in a single group is, perhaps, on the ground of coherence, a course not entirely justifiable. Yet to make any of the divisions that suggest themselves would seem to be even less justifiable. A separation, for instance, into poets and prose-writers is scarcely possible, since many of the writers were both; and to divide along other lines, as into Cambridge scholars, anti-slavery agitators, and the like, would again be only to work confusion by making divisions that seriously overlap. It seems better therefore to keep the writers together, regarding them broadly as contributors, each in his way, to our national life and character—as co-workers toward the one end of upbuilding a modern nation of political unity and of continuous moral and intellectual growth. It is true, the writers we have already treated might be regarded in the same light, but there is at least this difference, that they worked more specifically to literary or personal ends, while the men whom we have now to consider were in closer touch with our social organization, and their writings and speeches largely grew out of, or contributed toward, the wide activities among which they moved.

ORATORY

Oratory in America, which has perhaps had a more continuous history than any other form of letters except theology,

reached its highest development between 1830 and 1860. This is, of course, only another manifestation of the great intellectual and artistic energy that attended the development and fixing of our national character, the more direct stimulus in this case being found in the political conditions—in the difficult adjustment of early national principles, and especially in the unsettled and continually vexing issue of slavery. But our oratory scarcely rose to the level attained in other literary forms. It was made illustrious by at least two eminently great men—Webster and Lincoln—but it never united in one man all the original genius and the eloquent and scholarly virtues that have made the speeches of Demosthenes, Cicero, Bossuet, and Burke, permanent classics in the world's literature.

Daniel Webster, 1782-1852.

Daniel Webster we are still disposed to regard as our foremost exponent of deliberative and forensic eloquence. He had, to begin with, physical advantages that seemed to proclaim him an even greater man than he was. Carlyle, a master at portraiture, saw him once and described him in a letter to Emerson: "The tanned complexion; that amorphous, crag-like face; the dull black eyes under their precipice of eyebrow, like dull anthracite furnaces, needing only to be *blown*; the mastiff mouth, accurately closed. ..... He is a magnificent specimen; you might say to all the world, 'This is your Yankee Englishman, such limbs we make in Yankeeland.'" Born on a backwoods farm in New Hampshire at the close of the Revolutionary War, and graduated from Dartmouth in 1801, Webster rapidly rose in the legal profession, until he was sent to Congress in 1813. He shortly afterward took up his residence at Boston, and from that time on, as representative, senator, secretary of state, and Whig aspirant for the Presidency, he was, as Carlyle put it, "the notablest of our notabilities." His supremacy in American statesmanship was somewhat comparable to that, in later years, of Gladstone in English or of Bismarck in Prussian.

Webster's great service was done in the stormy Congressional debates of 1830-1832, when he came forward in opposition to the principle of state sovereignty, and helped to fix finally the supreme power and authority of the federal constitution. He made himself the champion of the national idea, of complete union, and it is fitting that he should be remembered by those famous words with which he closed the speech in reply to Hayne: "Liberty *and* Union, now and forever, one and inseparable." The great blemish upon his career was his weakness in not facing squarely the question of slave-holding when that issue was approaching a crisis. By supporting the compromise measures of 1850 instead of throwing his influence with the radical opponents of slavery, he added to the confidence of the slave power and contributed much to the final disastrous results. Whittier, in the poem *Ichabod*, lashed him severely for his defection. But Webster suffered to the full for his weakness, and many years after his death Whittier was glad to do his memory justice, mourning, in *The Lost Occasion*, that Webster had not been spared till the day of actual disunion, assured that no stronger voice than his would have then

> "Called out the utmost might of men,
> To make the Union's charter free
> And strengthen law by liberty."

The best examples of Webster's forensic pleading are to be found in the argument on the Dartmouth College Case before the United States Supreme Court in 1818 and in his speech at the White murder trial at Salem in 1829. His great deliberative speeches in the Senate have already been mentioned—the Reply to Hayne in 1830, and the "Seventh of March Speech" in favor of compromise in 1850. His best public addresses include one delivered at the anniversary at Plymouth in 1820, one at the laying of the corner-stone of the Bunker Hill Monument and another at its completion, and a eulogy on

Adams and Jefferson. His oratory was mainly of the old type, only some degrees removed from the half-pedantic classicism that was the ideal of the early academic orators. Yet he was undeniably eloquent, both in the conventional and in the real sense of the word—clear in thought, strong and pure and sonorous in diction, with a beauty of imagery and an animation of style that have set his printed speeches among the select examples of modern oratorical prose. What those speeches must have been in utterance all the enthusiastic accounts of their hearers will not suffice for us to realize, since the force of the speaker's personality must have counted for even more than his words, lending impressiveness to his simplest and calmest statements, and enabling him, when deeply stirred, to carry everything before him.

Henry Clay, 1777-1852.
J. C. Calhoun, 1782-1850.

Henry Clay, who belonged to Virginia by birth and to Kentucky by residence, came into public life somewhat before Webster, and rose to be the recognized leader of the Whig party, and, with the exception of Webster, its foremost man. He was three times a candidate for the Presidency, and once narrowly missed election. Though opposed to slavery, he was not radical in his views. As the chief promoter of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the author of the compromise measures of 1850, he earned the title of "the great pacificator." As an orator he held and swayed audiences as effectually as ever Webster did, though more exclusively by his personality and his rhetorical magic. He lacked the learning and depth of that great statesman, and his orations are now little read. From farther south, and with wholly southern views and doctrines, came John C. Calhoun, of South Carolina. It was he, then president of the Senate, whom Webster was really attacking in his famous Reply to Hayne in 1830, for Calhoun was an ardent believer in States' Rights and was the author of the doctrine of Nullification. He

was scarcely eloquent, as we ordinarily understand the term, but was a great thinker, and the clearness of his logic was conspicuous in everything he said. This, coupled with his earnestness and his candor, gave him a clear title to his fame.

Massachusetts produced the men who pressed Webster most closely for oratorical honors of the academic kind—Rufus Choate, the lawyer, and Edward Everett, the scholar, statesman, and diplomatist. Choate was never brought into the same great conflicts as Webster, his eloquence being expended before juries; but he had even more than Webster's scholarship and refinement, and, with a fervid imagination and an inexhaustible flow of words, he exercised over emotional hearers that "spell" which it was long thought to be an orator's highest virtue to exercise. His oratory held much of the poetic quality, and is seen at its best in his eulogies—the eulogy, for example, on Webster. Everett, who began life as an editor and professor of Greek, held many high positions: he was governor of Massachusetts, minister to Great Britain, president of Harvard College, Secretary of State, and United States senator. His oratory also was of the finished and scholarly type. It might even be called cold, for Everett lacked the personal force which Choate and Webster possessed. Yet by frequent lectures on the platform he came into closer touch with the general public than most statesmen of his day. Emerson testified to his great influence on the youth of New England; and late in life he delivered his famous eulogy on Washington one hundred and fifty times in the interest of the Mount Vernon Association. His last important oration was the one delivered at the dedication of the national cemetery at Gettysburg in 1863 —an occasion made most memorable by another address, the unpretentiously noble speech of Abraham Lincoln.

Rufus Choate, 1799-1859.

Edward Everett, 1794-1865.

Lincoln, almost the antithesis of the academic orators,

was a potent influence upon what might be called the modern school—that school which discards pedantic phrases and classical allusions, rather avoids rhetorical climaxes and other effects, and depends upon a less impassioned, more conversational manner. Lincoln's training was obtained in actual law-practice, where he had to confront and handle real issues before audiences immediately concerned. His audiences, too, were of the primitive West, more keen than cultured. He practiced at the Illinois bar as early as 1837; and in 1858, when a candidate for the United States senatorship from Illinois, he held in that state the series of joint discussions with Stephen A. Douglas, largely on the slavery question, which made him famous. The schooling was precisely suited to the man, and it was a wholly natural result that the more momentous addresses which he was called upon later to deliver—his two inaugural addresses, for instance, or the Gettysburg address—should be models of simplicity, sincerity, directness, and force. Whatever virtues lie in the Saxon character and may be expressed in the Saxon tongue, these are summed up in the unadorned eloquence of Abraham Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1865.

The anti-slavery movement brought forth speakers of many kinds in many places, but apart from Lincoln and Garrison (who was more of a journalist than a speaker), the most conspicuous orators identified with the direct issue of abolition were Charles Sumner and Wendell Phillips, both of Boston, and both again orators of the scholarly type. Sumner's work was done chiefly in Congress, where he was recognized for years as the great anti-slavery leader. Indeed, the history of Sumner is virtually the history of the anti-slavery conflict. His speeches were marked by soundness of reason and stateliness of style, and the fifteen published volumes of them make an imposing addition to our

Charles Sumner, 1811-1874.

Wendell Phillips, 1811-1884.

literature. The speech on "The True Grandeur of Nations" is best remembered. Wendell Phillips was a platform orator, who made public speaking his life-work. His long service to the abolitionists made his name, like Garrison's and Sumner's, almost synonymous with their cause. As an orator he added to the learning, grace, and polish of Everett, something more of personal force that grew out of real devotion, however mixed its motives, to a great moral principle. After the war he continued in the lecture field. His best-known addresses are those on "Toussaint L'Ouverture" and "The Lost Arts."

As a rule, the oratory of the pulpit leaves a less permanent record than that of the platform, and there is practically nothing to be added here to what was said on this subject in the chapter on religion and philosophy in New England. In that place were mentioned the Unitarian ministers, Channing and others, and also the Congregationalists Bushnell of Hartford and Beecher of Brooklyn. Doubtless Beecher was, though somewhat erratic, one of our most versatile and brilliant preachers. But even though we extend our survey beyond the time-limit of this chapter to the present day, we can find no other to mention by the side of these, unless it be Phillips Brooks (1835–1893), late of the Protestant Episcopal church at Boston. The oratory of the pulpit, as of the platform generally, has distinctly waned.

HISTORY AND CRITICISM

The historians, so-called, of the days of our earliest literature were scarcely entitled to that name. Whatever history they wrote was in the nature of chronicles or annals—dry, ill-connected, unexplained relations of occurrences, without the insight, imagination, and mastery of expression that were needed to make literature. On the other hand, whatever literature they wrote was the narration of personal experiences, useful and entertaining, but without the breadth of vision and critical

spirit that would have made worthy history. Our real historians—men with a mastery of facts, with a power of arranging and interpreting those facts, and with a definite artistic purpose—appeared only with the nineteenth century.

Irving's excellent work in this field has already been described. Passing over, then, the names of the early and minor writers of the century—Sparks, the biographer, with his worthy lives of Washington and Franklin; Hildreth, with his discriminating but uninteresting history of the United States; Palfrey, with his very able but also unromantic history of New England; J. S. C. Abbott, with biographies and a history of the Civil War; and James Parton, a later biographer, with lives of Franklin, Voltaire; and others,—we come to the name of one who, although by no means the greatest, was long the most conspicuous of our historians—George Bancroft. The publication of Bancroft's *History of the United States*, in ten successive volumes, extended from 1834 to 1874, with a revised edition in 1883. How careful and exhaustive his researches were may be inferred from this fact, and also from the fact that the portion of our history covered by them extends only to 1789. It was a huge undertaking, to which Bancroft brought all the resources of wealth, training, and social and political influence—everything, in short, but genius. He lived at Washington where he had free access to the government archives, and he collected besides an enormous private library of transcripts of documents from all parts of the world. Invaluable, however, as his great work is, its over-patriotic and slightly partisan bias prevents it from being accepted as a final authority, while its want of picturesqueness in matter and style makes it hard to read, and puts it quite without the pale of literature.

George Bancroft, 1800-1891.

Two of our historians were attracted, like Irving, to foreign

themes. It was William Hickling Prescott in favor of whom Irving gave up his long-cherished plan of writing a history of the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Prescott, a native of Salem, and a graduate of Harvard, devoted a life of scholarly leisure and partial blindness to that brilliant period of Spain's history when she was extending her empire over the new world. The result was a series of able and fascinating works: *Ferdinand and Isabella* (1837), *The Conquest of Mexico* (1843), and *The Conquest of Peru* (1847). The other of the two, John Lothrop Motley, of Boston, after trying law and feeling his way toward literature with several novels (*Morton's Hope*, 1839, and *Merry Mount*, 1848), turned to history, and spent much of his life abroad in the study of the heroic period of the Netherlands in the days of William of Orange. He published *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* in 1856. The romantic picturesqueness of the periods treated by both these writers was fairly equalled by the grace and animation of their style, and they paralleled the triumph gained by Macaulay in England, of having their works read like so much romance. Schoolboys could turn from Irving and Cooper to Prescott and Motley with scarcely any loss of interest. Prescott, however, was somewhat deficient in critical insight; and Motley, though possessed of ample powers and exercising more restraint in his style than Prescott, treated his theme so narrowly that he was "really not a historian, but a describer of mighty historic deeds." Thus it has come about that the supremacy among our historians, which was first awarded to one of these men and then to the other, has been gradually transferred to a successor of both.

W. H. Prescott, 1796-1859.
J. L. Motley, 1814-1877.

Francis Parkman, also a Boston and a Harvard man, resolved at the early age of eighteen upon the plan of the history to which he devoted his mature years. He took an American theme, the "Story of the Woods," the tripartite

conflict that lasted for a century and a half between the English, the French, and the Indians, on the frontiers of the northern new world. In pursuit of his purpose he undertook a journey to the Rocky Mountains, and spent some time in a village of the Sioux Indians. The hardships of the trip so impaired his already frail health that his life-work was done with weak and sometimes almost useless eyesight, and under painful nervous affliction. But he knew his ground and his facts with a minute specialist's knowledge; he had an intellect of philosophic breadth, acuteness, fairness, and accuracy; and he was gifted with a delightful style. Nor was his theme essentially less attractive than those of his forerunners, while its nearness to the interests of American readers gave it an enhanced national value. His first printed work, *The California and Oregon Trail* (1849), the record of his personal experiences, is read by boys as eagerly as Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast*, and is one of those real stories that are almost better than romances. It is filled with the fragrance of woods and streams and the fresh, free air of the plains and mountains. Parkman's series of histories began with the one that is last in historical order—*The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851). The publication of the other seven extended from *Pioneers of France in the New World* (1865) to *A Half-Century of Conflict* (1892). It is an admirable series, worthy of its great theme, and it sets Parkman, by common consent, among the historians of genius.

Francis Parkman, 1823-1893.

Besides the formal historians there are certain other workers in the broad field of scholarly research and criticism who might justly claim a share of attention. There was Professor Ticknor, the first incumbent of the chair of French and Spanish which was founded at Harvard in 1817, and which was held later by Longfellow and by Lowell. His important work was a *History of Spanish Literature* (1849), which was not only a pioneer in its

field, but was so able and sound that it remains still a standard authority. There was also Edwin Percy Whipple, a Boston lecturer and critic, who in his books (*Literature and Life*, 1849; *Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*, 1869; etc.), made some approach toward the kind of philosophical criticism that is now held in highest esteem. Here, too, might be mentioned men like James T. Fields, the veteran Boston publisher and editor, and writer of *Yesterdays with Authors;* George P. Marsh, the Vermont philologist; and Richard Grant White, of New York, variously known as a Shakespearean scholar, a music and art critic, and a writer of popular philology. But, though it would be easy to name many more, and some much better scholars than these, the number of men who have successfully combined sound scholarship with literary gifts is not large. The leaders among them were, of course, Longfellow, Lowell, and Holmes, and to these leaders must be accorded a treatment in proportion to their significance.

George Ticknor, 1791-1871.

E. P. Whipple, 1819-1886.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW, 1807-1882

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born at Portland, Maine, February 27, 1807. The maternal line of the Wadsworths goes back to John Alden and Priscilla Mullens, two passengers of the Mayflower who have found a quiet fame in *The Courtship of Miles Standish.* The Longfellows do not trace back quite so far on American soil, but there was a goodly line of them in Massachusetts and in Maine—colonist, blacksmith, school teacher, judge, and lawyer. Henry Wadsworth, so named for a maternal uncle who had sacrificed his life before Tripoli in the war with Algiers, was the lawyer's son. There was no promise of poetry in his ancestry, perhaps, but some inspiration was to be drawn from his surroundings. For the Portland of his birth was both a beautiful and a busy town

Youth.

—a "Forest City" with miles of sea beach, and a port where merchant vessels from the West Indies exchanged sugar and rum for the products of the forests and the fisheries of Maine; and these scenes, or the memory of them, directly inspired two or three of his best poems, notably *My Lost Youth.*

We are told that he was almost a model boy—"true, high-minded, and noble;" "remarkably solicitous always to do right;" handsome, too; "sensitive, impressionable; active, eager, impetuous, often impatient; quick-tempered, but as quickly appeased; kind-hearted and affectionate, the sunlight of the house." His conduct at school was "very correct and amiable." He read much, being always studious and thoughtful, though never melancholy. The first book which "fascinated his imagination" was Irving's *Sketch-Book;* and it would be easy to point out more than superficial resemblances between Longfellow's poetry and Irving's prose, just as there are certain fundamental characteristics common to Bryant's poetry and Cooper's prose. The resemblance goes back to the character of the men. "The gentle Longfellow" and "the gentle Irving" we say with equal readiness, nor forget that gentleness implies gentility, inherent nobleness and manhood. Out of such characters grow naturally long and unruffled lives, as out of such a character as Poe's grows almost inevitably a short and tragic one.

Longfellow's education was obtained at the Portland Academy and at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, where he had for classmates several youths who were afterward to become famous,—two in the world of letters, J. S. C. Abbott and Nathaniel Hawthorne. He began to write pretty, melodious little poems and to contribute both verse and prose to various struggling magazines while still an undergraduate. He was graduated in 1825. His father desired him to study law; he himself spoke, though not very seriously, of turning farmer; but a Chair of Modern Languages was about to be established

at Bowdoin, and the trustees proposed that the young graduate of scholarly and literary tastes should fit himself for it. Three years were accordingly spent in delightful study and travel in France, Spain, Italy, and Germany, and the foundations were laid, not only of his scholarship, but of that passion for the romantic scenery and lore of the old world which followed him, as it followed Irving, through life, and gave color and direction to so much of his work.

Professional Life; Prose Writings.

He returned in 1829 to take the professorship at Bowdoin, a very young man for so dignified a position. He married in 1831, and though his domestic life was saddened by misfortunes, the beauty of it may be judged from such poems as *Footsteps of Angels* and *The Children's Hour*. A second residence in Europe prepared the way for the Professorship of Romance Languages at Harvard, where he took up his duties in 1836. He secured rooms at the historic Craigie House overlooking the Charles River,—a house in which Washington had been quartered for some months when he came to Cambridge in 1775 to take command of the Continental forces. After his second marriage (his first wife died during his second residence in Europe) the house passed into his possession and became his permanent home. He was thenceforth one of the most prominent members—the real centre, Mr. Higginson declares—of that group of men, including Felton, Sumner, Hawthorne, Agassiz, Lowell, and Holmes, who gave distinction to the Boston and Cambridge of earlier days.

He had already published, besides a translation of a French Grammar and some translations from a Spanish poet, a *Sketch-Book*-like series of effusions which he entitled *Outre-Mer; a Pilgrimage Beyond the Sea* (1833, 1834). In 1839 he published a second and more ambitious prose work, *Hyperion*, in which the experiences of his second journey to Europe were woven into a kind of romance. Inasmuch as the romance itself was largely

DANIEL WEBSTER

EDWARD EVERETT

WILLIAM HICKLING PRESCOTT

FRANCIS PARKMAN

and they were received in England with equal cordiality. True, it is easy to pick flaws in them. Critics will continue to condemn the *Psalm of Life* for its preaching tone, its incoherent structure, its commonplace ideas, its trite phrases, hazy figures, and borrowed ornaments. But without shutting our eyes to these defects, which really exist, and without maintaining that the poem is of any high order of greatness, it is still possible to enjoy it and to understand why it has made such a wide and deep impression. It is sound at heart. So simple and melodious as to sing itself into the memory, it breathes at the same time an ardent courage and a cheerful faith. Its theme is life, and it is alive with Saxon energy and earnestness. It seems as useless to test it, like a more ambitious poem, by the ordinary canons of criticism as it would be to test thus a stray ballad or a religious hymn that has fixed itself in the affections of a whole people.

The same is true of most of these early poems. One or two of them, perhaps,—the *Prelude*, *Hymn to the Night*, *Footsteps of Angels*,—are good by the more formal tests. But the primary reason of their success is plain. It lies in their character—their simple and sincere feeling and their sufficient art. Longfellow was faithfully following the counsel of the "distant voices" which Sir Philip Sidney heard three centuries ago—

"Look, then, into thine heart, and write."

And in all but range, this early volume has remained fairly representative of its author. It defined his position as the household poet, the poet of the masses in their better moods, when the common aspirations, joys, and even sorrows of life, come to them as beautiful things to be treasured in beautiful words. Longfellow exercised his powers in many directions afterward, but he did not climb much higher.

The next book of verse, the *Ballads and Other Poems* of

1841. shows one of the new directions his activity took. He was to be the singer of men and deeds as well as of musings and exhortations. The earlier tones re-appear in such a poem as *Endymion*, with its oft-quoted lines—

Ballads.

> "No one is so accursed by fate,
> No one so utterly desolate,
> But some heart, though unknown,
> Responds unto his own"—

and in the even more familiar *Rainy Day*, *Maidenhood*, and *Excelsior;* the new note is to be found particularly in *The Village Blacksmith*, like Burns's *Cotter's Saturday Night* an exaltation of humble toil and reward, and in the two stirring ballads of *The Skeleton in Armor* and *The Wreck of the Hesperus*. The difference in manner is as marked as the difference in substance:—

> "And as to catch the gale
> Round veered the flapping sail,
> Death! was the helmsman's hail,
> Death without quarter!
> Midships with iron keel
> Struck we her ribs of steel;
> Down her black hulk did reel
> Through the black water!"

Here is the metre of Drayton's *Agincourt*, throbbing still with the old martial passion and not greatly excelled by Tennyson himself in the *Charge of the Light Brigade*. That Longfellow should have shown himself such a good ballad writer was scarcely to be expected when we consider the gentleness of his nature and the even niceness of his technique. In fact, he was not often successful in work that demanded intensity of feeling. His *Poems on Slavery* (1842) were merely pretty and polished when, to produce any effect worth producing, they should have been strong even to ruggedness. But let him be

autobiographical, the publication was in rather questionable taste. Besides, the book was sentimental in tone and luxuriant in style, so much so, indeed, that it is difficult to understand to-day how it could have been the product of a man past thirty. But its translations and criticisms of German literature, which was then little known in America, were serviceable, and it can have done no harm by setting "hundreds of readers a-dreaming of pleasant wanderings by the song-haunted German rivers." Ten years later he ventured to add to his meagre list of prose writings another romance, *Kavanagh*—a New England tale somewhat in the manner of Hawthorne but with little of Hawthorne's charm of style or spiritual insight. Poetry was as clearly Longfellow's proper medium as prose was Hawthorne's or Cooper's, and to poetry the main energies of his life were dedicated.

In the same year in which *Hyperion* was published, appeared also his first volume of poetry, *Voices of the Night*. *The Psalm of Life* had been printed anonymously the year before, in the *Knickerbocker Magazine*, and had been circulated so widely that Longfellow took this means of declaring his authorship. The volume contained, in addition to a prelude and his translations, the two collections of verse, of eight poems each, which are now printed in his works under the general titles of "Voices of the Night" and "Earlier Poems." In one way the publication was as remarkable as the publication of Tennyson's early volume in England nine years before; for at least six of the eight poems for which the volume was named—*Hymn to the Night*, *A Psalm of Life*, *The Reaper and the Flowers*, *Footsteps of Angels*, *Flowers*, *Midnight Mass for the Dying Year*—made their way instantly to a popularity that has scarcely diminished in sixty years. This may have been partly due to the dearth of good poetry in America; yet the poems deserved their success,

"Voices of the Night," 1839.

as notes of music "from the lips of Nawadaha, the musician, the sweet singer."

> "In the vale of Tawasentha,
> In the green and silent valley.
> There he sang of Hiawatha,
> Sang the Song of Hiawatha,
> Sang his wondrous birth and being,
> How he prayed and how he fasted,
> How he lived, and toiled, and suffered,
> That the tribes of men might prosper,
> That he might advance his people!"

It was not long before the tales of Hiawatha's Fasting, of his Wooing, of Blessing the Cornfields, of The Ghosts and The Famine, were known practically wherever English poetry is read.

It is wrong to claim for *Hiawatha* any special significance as a poem with a native American theme, sprung from the soil. Longfellow sang, in a purely literary and romantic spirit, the traditions of a race that was to him alien and almost unknown, as an Englishman might turn into poetry the legends of the aborigines of Australia. He idealized, too, far more than Cooper, and beyond all warrant. Local color and local truth are not the strong points of the poem. It must be accepted solely for the admirable work of art that it is. A more strictly native theme was that of *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, which followed in three years; but the homely Puritan tale, with its repetition of the manner of *Evangeline*, did not afford the poet quite the right inspiration, and it frequently lapses into mere prose.

Later Years.

In 1854, the year before the publication of *Hiawatha*, Longfellow resigned his professorship at Harvard that he might be free to pursue his more congenial, and by that time more profitable, literary work. In 1861 the happiness of his home life was broken by a calamitous accident. Mrs. Longfellow, while engaged in sealing up for

her little daughters some packages containing curls of their hair, set fire to her dress and was fatally burned. *The Cross of Snow*, a sonnet written eighteen years afterward, gives us some hint of what Longfellow must have suffered. In the unrest that followed this domestic affliction, further fed by the anxieties of the Civil War, the poet turned for solace to the more mechanical exercise of writing tales and making translations. The *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (the inn really existed in the town of Sudbury, and the characters introduced were actual friends of Longfellow, in slight disguise) appeared in 1863. Seven years later he had completed and published a work worthy at once of his scholarship and his genius,—a metrical yet extremely literal translation of Dante's *Divina Commedia*. It fails, as perhaps all translations must fail, to catch the burning intensity of the original, but all in all it is the most satisfactory verse rendering we have in English of a poem for which nothing but an absolutely literal translation will ever suffice. About the same time, too, he completed what he hoped would be his masterwork, the conception of which had in a sense "dominated his literary life," namely, a trilogy which aimed to set forth Christianity in its ancient, mediæval, and modern aspects, and which he entitled *Christus: a Mystery*. But the task was beyond his powers. The middle portion, "The Golden Legend," which had been published twenty years before, was fairly successful, but the other parts, "The Divine Tragedy" and "The New England Tragedies," are so little read that they are not always incorporated in his collected works.

After this Longfellow attempted no more poems of large scope, though he continued to write many sonnets and minor pieces, from *The Hanging of the Crane* and *Morituri Salutamus* down to that lyric of serene faith, *The Bells of San Blas*, written but a few days before his death. He died on the twenty-fourth of March, 1882, aged seventy-five. In 1884, a bust of

him was placed in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey, near the tomb of Chaucer,—England's gracious tribute to the renown of America's best loved poet.

The parallel between Longfellow and Irving, which has already been suggested, can be drawn further. Longfellow, also, kept pretty carefully to the beaten track where all could follow him. In the matter of form he knew well enough how to surprise his public, and he did so again and again; but even these seeming novelties always turned out to be something old and approved. He preferred simple themes and simple language, refraining from any innovations that might repel. Thus he established himself securely in his readers' affections, always meeting their expectations and making his name in a sense synonymous with American poetry, —though not our greatest yet our leading singer by virtue of his continuous, satisfying song.

Critical Summary.

The supreme poetic gift, imaginative insight, was not his in any marked degree. Much broader than Bryant, his contemplations did not run so deep. Herein, too, he falls far below his English contemporary, Tennyson, of whom he was in some other respects so nearly the peer. He had no large visions, whether of the political destiny of America or of the moral and social destiny of man. He had little comprehension of the forces that were working such a change in his own generation—the ideas of liberty and equality, the new science, and the new education, that were rapidly emancipating both body and mind. Farther yet from him was it to see the images of beauty or terror which Poe saw beyond the veil of life. He had no power of conjury over the spirit world. Now and then he touched the heights, as in the vision of the majestic *Hymn to the Night*:—

> "I heard the trailing garments of the Night
> Sweep through her marble halls!

I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
From the celestial walls!"—

or in the figure inspired by the gun-barrels in the arsenal at Springfield ranged and shining like the pipes of an organ:—

"Ah! what a sound will rise, how wild and dreary,
When the death-angel touches those swift keys!"

But these things are too infrequent to be considered characteristic: we do not recognize them as like Longfellow. He was something more than a poet of fancy, but in the fields of the imagination his range was in the lowlands.

His faculty is best described as one that was mainly receptive and assimilative. He had a true instinct for beauty, and he showed his appreciation of any beauty in another's work by frankly borrowing it for his own. He never disgraced it; usually, unless it came from a very high source, he bettered it in the borrowing. If this was not genius, it was a talent for detecting and advertising genius, for turning to the best account the best that the world's literature could afford. For example, Tennyson published *Locksley Hall*, and immediately afterward Longfellow composed *The Belfry of Bruges* in the same metre and with something of the same phrasing. This practice, which came from his habit of composing in his study and relying on his books for inspiration, naturally brought upon him charges of imitating. Wide readers and critics, like Poe, knew the sources, and, as they read his poems, could not help being reminded of them. The nature of the imitation may be learned by comparing *The Building of the Ship* or *Keramos* with Schiller's *Song of the Bell*, or, for a minor instance, *The Slave in the Dismal Swamp* with Moore's *Ballad*, "They made her a grave, too cold and damp." But Longfellow never answered the charges, both because they were in part true and because, as far as they

were true, there was nothing in them to cause him shame. He was acting honorably; even when the imitation was most obvious he added enough of his own to justify him, and all right-minded readers were grateful to him for exercising his faculty so happily. Besides, any doubt of his being a poet in his own right could always be allayed by turning to such songs of genuine, spontaneous utterance as *The Bridge*, or *The Day is Done*, or *My Lost Youth*.

His versatility was greater than that of any other American poet. Though most at ease in lyric poetry, he essayed also, as we have seen, both epic and dramatic, with the minor varieties of ballad and pastoral. As a story-teller in verse he belongs to that band of English rhymers led by Chaucer and Scott. He was almost as thorough a romanticist, too, as Scott—steeped in mediævalism and Germanism. In form, his range was as wide as in substance. He tried all forms, and seemed to master one as easily as another, with the single exception of heroic blank verse, which was too stately for his agile Muse. But the mastership, which in blank verse he has to yield to Bryant, he holds in an equally difficult form. As a sonnet writer he has had no rival in America. Indeed, one might support the assertion that Longfellow wrote no greater poetry than is to be found in some of his sonnets, as the *Divina Commedia* series, *Three Friends of Mine*, *Milton*, or *Nature*.

Through these things—his simplicity, his breadth, his receptive faculty, his versatility—Longfellow became our great teacher. He was a scholar himself, to begin with,—one of America's earliest and best. He was the first person on this side of the Atlantic to write upon Anglo-Saxon. He led many a student to a knowledge of the modern languages and literatures, and by his translations and adaptations spread far and wide their benignant influence. But most of all he assisted in the spread of culture through the subtle influence of his art.

He was an artist to the finger-tips. In this respect he far outran Bryant and was a revelation to a Puritan world. And mark how he reached that world. Poe could not do it, for pure art and imagination would not avail. But Longfellow, though there were no theologians among his ancestors, had the strong moral bias of his New England environment; like Bryant, though in less degree, he was given to meditating and moralizing; and all the while his readers, who went to him for counsel and cheer, were unconsciously succumbing to the witcheries of song and learning to like the very things they had been taught to fear or despise. It was but another step to the drama, to music, to painting and sculpture. Thus it became Longfellow's mission to soften the asperities of a narrow creed and life. Perhaps the slight sentimentalism that clings to his work, as to Irving's, was a necessary part of this disciplinary task. We can pardon his fondness for exclamation points and pretty figures of speech when we contemplate the large result. Nor if, after we have learned to like such things as "footprints on the sands of time" and "forget-me-nots of the angels," we find that our poetic education is not complete until Tennyson and Shakespeare and Dante have taught us to dislike them again, should we turn with ingratitude from our first teacher, who made the second lesson possible.

Finally, and once more like Irving, Longfellow has a high claim to our admiration in his fundamental, serene humanity. Scholarly though he was, bookish, and often getting his inspiration at second hand, he was never scholastic, technical, obscure, or dry. Love is more than wisdom, and in every line that Longfellow wrote there beats a kindly human heart. Rarely does he count to us intellectually so much as emotionally. He fought shy of analysis, put quietly by the problems and stress of his age, if indeed he felt them, remaining to the

end an ardent lover of beauty and peace; and over all his poetry broods

"A Sabbath sound, as of doves
In quiet neighborhoods."

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER, 1807-1892

Another poet in whom love of human nature was a marked trait was born north of Boston in the same year as Longfellow—John Greenleaf Whittier. Little of the scholar, however, is to be found in this New England Quaker, whose lot it was to pass from the plow to politics and from politics to literature. He was born in 1807 in East Haverhill, a rugged, hilly section of Essex County, in the extreme north-east corner of Massachusetts. In the southern part of the same county lies Salem, the birthplace of Hawthorne. The home of Whittier was in a country district; the town of Haverhill was three miles away, and to this day no roof is in sight from the old homestead. The house, considerably more than a hundred years old at the poet's birth, was built by his great-great-grandfather. The Whittiers were mostly stalwart men, six feet in height, who lived out their three-score and ten years. The poet, though his years were more than any of his immediate ancestors', fell a little short of the family stature and was of slender frame. He attributed his delicate health to the hard work and exposure of his youth. He milked cows, "grubbed stumps," built boulder fences, threshed grain with a flail, wore no flannels in the coldest weather, and woke often of winter mornings to find upon his coverlet siftings of snow. Something of this may be learned from *Snow-Bound*, which is a faithful picture of the Whittier homestead and household as they were eighty years ago.

A Farmer Boy.

It was a life utterly without luxury and with few means of culture. The family, however, was one of the most respected

in the community, and could draw to its fireside intelligent acquaintances, among them itinerant ministers of the Friends, to which sect it belonged. There were perhaps thirty books in the house, largely Quaker tracts and journals. Of course, there was the Bible, and through all his poetry Whittier reverts to the Bible for phrases and images as naturally as Keats reverts to classical mythology or Longfellow to mediæval legend. Memorable were the evenings when the school-teacher came and read to the family from books he brought with him—one most memorable when the book was a copy of Burns. On Whittier's first visit to Boston, an occasion honored by his wearing "boughten buttons" on his homespun coat and a broad-brim hat made by his aunt out of pasteboard covered with drab velvet, he purchased a copy of Shakespeare. One of the Waverley novels, its author as yet unknown, fell into his hands and was read eagerly,—but the parents did not share in that reading.

From School to Journalism and Politics.

He attended the district school a few weeks each winter; the nature of his schooling may be judged from the poem *To My Old Schoolmaster*. When he was nineteen he completed his scanty education with a year at an academy in Haverhill. From the time when the reading of Burns woke the poet within him, he was constantly writing rhymes, covering his slate with them and sometimes copying them out on foolscap. William Lloyd Garrison, soon afterward to be the leader of the abolition movement, had started his *Free Press* in a neighboring town. Whittier's father, interested in all philanthropic enterprises, was a subscriber, and to it Whittier's sister sent, without his knowledge, one of his poems. Thus began at once his literary and his political career. Garrison became interested in his new contributor, and the story has often been told of how the smart young editor drove out to the country home and Whittier was called

in from the field to meet him. It is not quite a parallel to the story of Cincinnatus, but important things came of the meeting. Through the long anti-slavery agitation that followed, Garrison and he were close friends, often working side by side. Two years after the meeting, Garrison, who was then editing a temperance paper in Boston, secured for him the editorship of a political journal there and he was soon in the thick of the tariff discussion, supporting Clay against Jackson in the campaign of 1832. He wrote in one of his letters, "I would rather have the memory of a Howard, a Wilberforce, and a Clarkson than the undying fame of Byron;" and though he was thinking of Byron's spirit rather than of his poetry, the declaration shows clearly that his interests lay less in literature than in political and social reform.

The editorial work begun at Boston was continued at Hartford, but proved too trying for his delicate health, and he returned to the farm. When the farm was sold four years later, he removed with his mother and sister to Amesbury. Meanwhile, he contributed much verse to the newspapers. But his interest in politics more and more overshadowed his other interests. "I have knocked Pegasus on the head," he wrote, "as a tanner does his bark-mill donkey when he is past service." He was elected to the legislature of Massachusetts, and there were excellent prospects of his being nominated for Congress. The anti-slavery agitation, however, was growing, fostered especially by Garrison's *Liberator* which was started in 1831, and as Whittier was soon seen to be an ardent supporter of the unpopular cause, his political prospects faded. No selfish considerations could prevent a man of his character from speaking out when he felt that the nation was guilty of harboring a great wrong. Quaker though he was, the fighting spirit was strong in him. It could be read in his piercing, deep-set eyes, and it can be read

Enlisted against Slavery.

in his verse. During his school days he had published anonymously a poem called *The Song of the Vermonters, 1779:—*

> "Ho—all to the borders! Vermonters, come down,
> With your breeches of deerskin and jackets of brown;
> With your red woolen caps, and your moccasins, come,
> To the gathering summons of trumpet and drum."

He disliked to acknowledge the authorship of so martial a poem, perhaps because he realized that the spirit of it was only too genuine.

He flung himself into the new cause, heart and soul. He could not counsel taking up arms; actual war, indeed, was a thing he dreaded. "For one, I thank God that he has given me a deep and invincible horror of human butchery." But all means short of war were to be tried. Both openly and privately he helped with advice some of the great leaders of the North—Sumner, Seward, Gerrit Smith. Occasionally he took part in public meetings. In 1837 he went to Philadelphia to edit the *Pennsylvania Freeman*, and was there when Pennsylvania Hall was burnt by a mob in protest against an anti-slavery convention. He was once pelted with eggs in the streets of Concord, New Hampshire, and thirty years afterward sent the coat which he had then worn, and which had been kept as a relic, to the needy freedmen of the South. But most of all he assisted the cause with his poetry, to which he turned once more with the inspiration born of a noble purpose. The bark-mill donkey was transformed into a knight's charger, and not even the rider himself ever sneered at it again.

The Laureate of Freedom.

Here was the real beginning of his career. Such poems as he had already published—*Moll Pitcher*, a poem of New England legendary life (1832), and the more ambitious *Mogg Megone* (1836)—were only conventional and almost worthless exercises in rhyme. It was the *Ballads* and the *Anti-Slavery Poems* of 1837 and 1838 that won

him a hearing and marked him as a poet with a mission—the accepted laureate of the Liberty party. Among the best of these poems were *Toussaint L' Ouverture*, *The Slave-Ships*, *Expostulation*, *The Hunters of Men*, *Stanzas for the Times*, *Farewell of a Virginia Slave Mother*, *The Pastoral Letter*. The last named was called forth by a letter written by the Congregational ministers of Massachusetts in which they pleaded that the perplexed subject of abolition be not brought up for debate in the churches. Whittier's poem was a scathing rebuke of what he conceived to be most unchristian conduct:—

"For, if ye claim the 'pastoral right'
To silence Freedom's voice of warning,
And from your precincts shut the light
Of Freedom's day around you dawning;

"If when an earthquake voice of power
And signs in heaven and earth are showing
That forth, in its appointed hour,
The Spirit of the Lord is going!
And, with that Spirit, Freedom's light
On kindred, tongue, and people breaking,
Whose slumbering millions, at the sight,
In glory and in strength are waking!

"What marvel, if the people learn
To claim the right of free opinion?
What marvel, if at times they spurn
The ancient yoke of your dominion?"

No stronger or clearer voice for freedom had been raised in American letters since Tom Paine nerved the soldiers at Valley Forge and Philip Freneau hurled his hot verses at the head of George the Third.

After 1844 Whittier gave up editorial duties altogether and became an established literary worker in the quiet of his Amesbury home. In 1847 he began to contribute regularly to the *National Era*, a weekly organ of the Anti-Slavery Society estab-

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

lished at Washington, the paper, it may be remembered, in which Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* first appeared. Through this medium many of his better poems were published: *Barclay of Ury*, *Angels of Buena Vista*, *Maud Muller*, *Burns*, *Mary Garvin*, *Ichabod*. *Ichabod*—the meaning of the Hebrew name is "departed glory"—shows well the intensity of the passions aroused by the burning controversies of the time. The poem was published in 1850 shortly after Webster's Seventh of March Speech in support of Clay's compromise measures and the Fugitive Slave Law. In it the great leader was mourned as one already dead, since his weakness in that supreme moment Whittier could not but regard as dishonor and moral death. At such a time, he said, "if one spoke at all, he could only speak in tones of stern and sorrowful rebuke." Out of the war and its issues grew other strong poems, like the hymn *Thy Will Be Done*, or the ballad of *Barbara Frietchie*, or the fervent and ecstatic *Laus Deo* that burst from him when the bells rang out for the passing of the constitutional amendment which abolished slavery and made

> "the cruel rod of war
> Blossom white with righteous law."

Legendary Ballads.

But the voice that had grown to such strength and clarity in the cause of liberty was returning again and again to the more purely lyrical notes it had essayed in youth. Two things always appealed strongly to Whittier's poetic imagination. One is the slender body of legendary lore that has come down from the colonial days of New England, including a few tales of the trials and persecutions of the early Quakers. *The Bridal of Pennacook*, *Mary Garvin*, *The Ranger*, *Mabel Martin*, *Marguerite*, *Cassandra Southwick*, *Barclay of Ury*, *Skipper Ireson's Ride*, and *How the Women Went from Dover* are all ballads that have been thus

inspired. They show a wide range. There is the rude, saga-like vigor of *Barclay of Ury* (a tale, however, not of New England, but of the Scotch Quakers); and there is the homely picturesqueness of

> "Old Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
> Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
> By the women o' Marble'ead."

Mary Garvin and *Mabel Martin* touch tender chords of sympathy. *Marguerite* is as pathetic as any poem in our literature, and *The Ranger* is almost as melodious as any.

New England Idyls.

The other favorite field of Whittier's imaginative exercise was the humble rural life in which his private interests were earliest centred. *Lays of My Home*, *Songs of Labor*, *Home Ballads*, were the titles of some of his successive volumes. He had himself learned the shoemaker's craft, he had driven cattle, he had worked in the cornfields, and he turned into brave-hearted song the duties and joys of the shoemakers, the drovers, and the huskers. He stands almost as a patron saint to that little man, the "barefoot boy with cheek of tan." He felt, with the poor voter on election day, the full meaning of republican equality:—

> "Up! clouted knee and ragged coat!
> A man's a man to-day!"

If it was Robert Burns who woke the poet within him, it was because his heart beat with kindred sympathies and ideals, and the question which he asks of Burns, —

> "Who sweetened toil like him, or paid
> To love a tribute dearer?"—

might almost be answered with his own name. Doubtless, in the consideration of work of this nature, one is too easily beguiled into praise and needs to remind himself of Matthew Arnold's protest against the immoderate estimation of Burns.

But the critic might well forego his office for a moment in the presence of these idyls of Whittier, in which the simple but universal emotions of the natural man find such simple and natural expression. Surely it seems that the lingering memory of youth's shy romance could call forth no more tenderly wistful cry than *My Playmate*, or that time can never take the charm from *A Sea Dream*, or *Maud Muller*, or *Telling the Bees*, or that poem, *In School-Days*, which Dr. Holmes cried over and Matthew Arnold himself praised as perfect.

Whittier never married. The little romances of his youth slipped quietly into memories and imparted a finer tone to the poetry of his mature years. The passions of his manhood were expended in the cause for which he labored, and his affections were given up to his home, and to his mother and sister while they lived. But there was a stronger strain than all these, the strain of devotion to the simple religious faith he cherished and of love for the Great Love which he saw ruling the destinies of men and nations. We must therefore add to the three classes of poems we have already described—the poems of freedom, the legendary ballads, and the New England idyls—a fourth, the religious poems and hymns. That Whittier knew something of the trials of faith and the heart-shaking questions that assailed the man in the land of Uz is shown by his dramatic *My Soul and I*, and the yearning *Questions of Life*:—

Religious Poems.

> "I am: how little more I know!
> Whence came I? Whither do I go?
> A centred self, which feels and is;
> A cry between the silences;
> A shadow-birth of clouds at strife
> With sunshine on the hills of life."

But these were passing moods. The full confession of his faith—a confession that leaves no place for doubt or despon-

dency—is rather to be sought in such later poems as *My Psalm*, *Trust*, *Revelation*, *The Over-Heart*, *The Eternal Goodness*.

"*Snow-Bound*" 1866. "*The Tent on the Beach*," 1867.

It was after the war, and after the sad break in his domestic life caused by the death of his sister Elizabeth, that Whittier's mind set like an ebbing tide toward the sea of past memories; and then came the composition of *Snow-Bound*, an idyl of winter and of home-life in the Arcadian age of New England. Even for a second generation of readers, description or praise of it seems almost superfluous, so securely has this poem, with its simple rustic pictures and its deep religious faith, maintained itself in the popular affection. It bids fair to take rank with such classics as *The Cotter's Saturday Night* and *The Deserted Village*; in America it is to-day more widely read than either. *The Tent on the Beach* of the year following was another large composition, but less coherent. It was such a sheaf of stories as an aging poet likes to gather, and makes a kind of companion piece to Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

Last Years.

For just a quarter of a century longer Whittier was spared, to complete many other volumes and separate poems. He would not venture to visit that "night-mare confusion of the world's curiosity shop," the Centennial Exposition of 1876 at Philadelphia, but he wrote the stately hymn that was sung at its opening. His last years were spent quietly with his relatives at various places in the Essex County neighborhood. He died at Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, September 7, 1892, in the eighty-fifth year of his age; and Holmes was the only one of the great New England group left to mourn his departure:—

> "Best loved and saintliest of our singing train,
> Earth's noblest tributes to thy name belong.

A lifelong record closed without a stain,
A blameless memory shrined in deathless song."

Bard and Philanthropist.

Whittier's rise to national fame was comparatively slow. He never obtruded himself as a poet, nor made bids for critical appreciation. Those who were most deeply interested in the abolition of slavery and who came to know him early and well, scarcely thought of him as a poet but rather as a rhyming champion of the cause they had at heart. But he gradually endeared himself to the hundreds who read poetry for its own sake, and by almost imperceptible degrees, and especially after the establishment of the *Atlantic Monthly* and his contributions to it, he came to be generally recognized as a worthy member of the New England group who already counted him one of themselves. Finally, the publication of *Snow-Bound* with its sustained beauty and intense human quality set him quite out of the ranks of occasional singers and left no doubt of his place.

His reputation has grown steadily ever since; and it seems likely to endure, for it rests upon a genuineness that is above all suspicion. However much we may talk of the genuineness of Bryant or Longfellow or Lowell, that of Whittier is seen to be of a still finer strain. It was equalled only by Emerson's. And Whittier got closer to the hearts of the people by being free from Emerson's skyey philosophy. If Longfellow was a poet for the people, Whittier was a poet of the people. He was content to use the very dialect of the people he knew and loved, and protested to his publisher that in that dialect *war* and *law*, *Martha* and *swarthy*, *pasture* and *faster*, were good rhymes. Uncultured he might be called; he did not care. He looked at life through no medium of tradition or false education. Standing in what Carlyle would call a close first relation to men and things, his were the ideal conditions of a bard.

Moreover, he brought to those conditions the sufficient gifts, first, the native impulse, and second, the power of song. He was a poet, not by choice and cultivation, as Longfellow, nor by fitful inspiration, as Bryant, Emerson, and Lowell, but always and uncontrollably, by high compulsion. His numbers were never studied. Like Emerson, he sang instinctively in the primitive four-beat measure; only, rhythmical and musical language came to him far more easily than to Emerson. He who idealized humble life and toil like Burns, sang with the lyric ease of Burns.

The slight valuation he set upon his gifts must itself go to his credit. Bard though he was, he refused to regard himself as such, steadfastly putting life first and poetry second. Thus he came, in mature manhood, to devote his whole energy to the eradication of our national crime. It was poetry's loss, possibly, and may account for the fact that we have scarcely any single work of magnitude from his pen; for the fruit of this productive period of his life is to be sought in our social and not in our literary history. The literature that he produced then we must to-day account of minor value: no number of *Ichabods* or of *Pastoral Letters* can outweigh one *Marguerite* or one *Sea-Dream*. Yet Whittier himself would have been the last to deplore the loss. That his poetry written with a purpose was of less literary value than his products of calmer art he would acknowledge, rejoicing still that his life had come to be dominated by such a noble purpose. We have only to read his *Proem* to discover the modesty of his own claims so far as rank in literature is concerned. He was satisfied if he could be written down as one who loved his fellow-men, one, in the words of the prelude of *Among the Hills*, who gave his prayers and strength to lift manhood up

> "Through broader culture, finer manners, love,
> And reverence, to the level of the hills."

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL, 1819-1891

Of the writers of first importance whom we have thus far treated, only Thoreau was born later than 1809. With James Russell Lowell, whose birth fell on the twenty-second of February, 1819, we are carried forward a full decade. But Lowell began his work so early and was so closely associated with the other great New England writers that he must be regarded as virtually their contemporary, a junior member of the group. One part of his fame, and in all probability the most enduring part, belongs to the ante-bellum period.

Early Influences.

The early surroundings of Whittier and of Lowell present nearly as striking a contrast as the conditions of New England life could afford. The two men were alike in being descended from families of sterling worth, but in other respects Lowell was far more favored, having all the means and incentives to culture which Whittier lacked. The Lowell family, in its several branches, has long been prominent in Massachusetts. The city of Lowell was named in honor of Francis Cabot Lowell, an uncle of the poet, who introduced cotton manufacturing into the United States; the Lowell Institute at Boston, with its free lectures on religion, science, and art, was the gift of Francis Cabot's son; the poet's grandfather drafted the anti-slavery clause in the Massachusetts Bill of Rights; his father, the Reverend Charles Lowell, was for more than fifty years a minister of Boston; his elder brother, Robert Traill Spence Lowell, and his sister, Mrs. Putnam, both became writers of some note.

James Russell, the youngest son of the family, was born at Cambridge, in the beautiful home known as Elmwood, and lived and died there. In this he was more fortunate than most Americans, who, said Holmes, are "all cuckoos—we make our homes in the nests of other birds." The house at Elmwood

was, like Craigie House, an historic place of Revolutionary memories; and the secluded, ample grounds made a fine rural refuge for a youth of poetic fancies. To understand fully what this home meant to the poet, both in youth and in maturity, one should read his *Indian Summer Reverie* and *Under the Willows*. Nor was there only wealth for the nature-lover out of doors; there were also treasures for the lover of books within. The Lowell library was the accumulation of several generations of scholarly men, and Lowell, familiar almost from infancy with books that Whittier even in the studious leisure of his old age never looked into, used to fall asleep to the reading of Spenser and the old English dramatists.

Possibly these advantages carried with them disadvantages. Lowell in his youth was shy, over-sensitive, and perhaps over-proud. Certainly it is hard to discover in his early letters the manliness and simplicity into which he finally matured. He was sent to Harvard as a matter of course—was a sophomore there in 1836, when Longfellow succeeded Ticknor as Professor of Romance Languages, and heard Emerson's address on *The American Scholar* in the fall of 1837. In the last year of his residence he was one of the editors of the college magazine, *Harvardiana*. He was elected class poet; but for some delinquency or offence, about which mystery seems still to hang, he was "rusticated" by the Faculty. That meant that he was banished to Concord to finish his studies privately, and that he could not be present on Class Day or read his poem, though he was allowed to return on Commencement Day and take his degree. Naturally he conceived a boyish dislike for Concord and for the Transcendentalism with which he came into some contact there. Emerson he regarded as "a good-natured man in spite of his doctrines."

At the time of his graduation he was quite as undecided

upon a "career" as Longfellow had been, and was apparently without Longfellow's bias toward scholarship and literature. He actually thought of all the professions in turn and also of mercantile life. He studied law, and indulged for a while in the delight of paying office-rent, but never really practiced. He did a little aimless contributing to magazines, and he published an unimportant volume of poems, *A Year's Life*, in 1841. The real turning-point of his life seems to have been his marriage to Maria White in 1844. She was a woman of beauty and of culture, and was possessed moreover of a sensitively humane spirit. The anti-slavery movement, which was just then making rapid headway, engaged her sympathies, and, possibly through hers, Lowell's. The man who in his class poem had ridiculed the abolitionists, was soon found writing on their side; and the history of Lowell from this time on is the history of an earnest, large-hearted, broad-minded man—a poet, a scholar, a statesman, and a patriot.

First Literary Period.

The four years from 1844 to 1848 were among the most productive and happy in Lowell's life. In the first of these years he published a second volume of poems, this time attracting some favorable attention. Then, under the influence of the public excitement aroused by the admission of Texas into the Union, a movement generally regarded as aiming at the extension of slave territory, he wrote *The Present Crisis*, revealing at once both the moral earnestness and the poetic fire that were latent within him:—

> "Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
> In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side."

It was indeed a "dolorous and jarring blast," so charged with indignation as to arouse the most apathetic reader in its own day and so informed with the spirit of righteousness that its echoes ring yet:—

"Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

The two great products of these years, however, were *The Biglow Papers* and *The Vision of Sir Launfal.* The Mexican War followed upon the annexation of Texas, and all who held Lowell's sentiments of justice and honor were more indignant than ever. In the summer of 1846 a regiment was raised in Boston, and Lowell was moved by the sight of a recruiting officer on the streets to write what he called "a squib" and send it to the Boston *Courier*:—

"The Biglow Papers."

"Thrash away, you'll *hev* to rattle
On them kittle-drums o' yourn,—
'Taint a knowin' kind o' cattle
Thet is ketched with mouldy corn."

In keeping with its Yankee dialect, it was signed "Hosea Biglow." Other poems of a similar character followed, and they proved so popular that in 1848 Lowell issued the series in a volume, with numerous interesting prefaces and letters purporting to come from one "Parson Wilbur," who played the rôle of friend and adviser to the young rustic poet, Hosea. The third number, "What Mr. Robinson Thinks," which grew out of a little passage in local politics, had, upon its first appearance, run like wildfire over the reading public of America, and, we are told, of England. Everywhere could be heard the refrain—

"But John P.
Robinson he
Sez he wunt vote fer Guvener B."

Another happy hit was "The Pious Editor's Creed," with its declaration—

"I don't believe in princerple,
But oh, I du in interest."

But the hardest knocks were reserved for the war and slavery. Lowell's quick native sense of humor—for these papers belong also very distinctly to the literature of humor—did him double service. It afforded an outlet for his feelings, leaving him personally even-tempered and happy in most trying times; and it enabled him to reach an audience that remained unmoved by the sober appeals of men like Garrison, Phillips, and Whittier. People who, with no particular sympathy for his sentiments, read the *Biglow Papers* for the wit and humor that were in them, came often upon passages that compelled them to stop and think:—

"Ef you take a sword an' dror it,
An' go stick a feller thru,
Guv'ment aint to answer for it,
God'll send the bill to you."

Such doctrine was sometimes called unpatriotic, but Lowell scarcely needed to answer that charge. Hosea Biglow was thoroughly loyal; as Parson Wilbur jestingly put it, "In the plowing season, no one has a deeper share in the well-being of the country than he." It was patriotism with conscience added. The conscience of Puritan New England was speaking out, just as it had always spoken, and it was indisputably making itself heard. A second series of the papers was written during the Civil War, and contained, along with much of the same piercing satire as marked the first series, the beautiful "Suthin in the Pastoral Line." Among the prefatory matter there was published with both series (revised in the second) that unique picture of Yankee life known as *The Courtin'*, which an Edinburgh critic has called "one of the freshest bits of pastoral in the language."

From *The Biglow Papers* to *The Vision of Sir Launfal* is a far cry. But Lowell, like Whittier, could turn from the heat and strife of public affairs to the solace of pure poetry, and

"build a bridge from Dreamland for his lay." One of the most spiritually significant of the legends that have come down from the early days of Christianity, namely, the quest of the Holy Grail, the cup of emerald from which Christ drank at the last supper, gave Lowell an inspiration, and within forty-eight hours, so we are told, the poem of knightly aspiration and brotherly love was written. The subject was handled freely; there was not much attempt to preserve the legendary atmosphere. Holmes found fault with the dandelions and the Baltimore oriole "in the tableau of the old feudal castle." But the freshness, vigor, and beauty of the poem have been universally praised. It makes one think of the rapturous song of Shelley's skylark that "from heaven or near it" pours his full heart

"The Vision of Sir Launfal."

"In profuse strains of unpremeditated art."*

Holmes might well forget, as many years later he declared he forgot, that Lowell was "a wit and a humorist, a critic and an essayist," in the presence of such buoyant, palpitating poetry.

A third work, published in this same year 1848, but of a much lower order of merit, was *A Fable for Critics*. It was a long criticism in rhyme of the American writers who were then prominent, and it was so penetrating, so illuminating, and so witty, that it is constantly quoted still. To say that it was always temperate or just would be going too far, and we should be on our guard against giving too much weight to its criticisms. We must remember that Lowell was still a young man under thirty, writing in this case anonymously, with every temptation to be witty and satirical. He over-praised Willis, as did almost everybody else; he could not fairly estimate men without humor, like

"A Fable for Critics."

*Professor Wendell, however, in his *Literary History of America*, says: "One of the traits for which you must search Lowell's volumes long is lyrical spontaneity."

Bryant and Cooper; he said altogether too little of Poe, and altogether too much of Margaret Fuller ("Miranda"), whom he scored unmercifully. But his appreciation of Hawthorne before Hawthorne's greatest work was done was much to his credit, and many of his happily-phrased estimates, like that of Emerson as "a Greek head on right Yankee shoulders," deserve to be long remembered.

Second Literary Period.

Lowell's wife died in 1853 and he married again in 1857. In the meantime he had made several trips to Europe, and upon his return from the second trip he entered upon what might be called the second fruitful period of his life. He was appointed to the Smith Professorship of Romance Languages at Harvard upon Longfellow's resignation, and assumed his duties there, which extended over a period of twenty years, in 1856. In the spring of 1857 he attended a memorable dinner-party given by the publisher, Mr. Moses D. Phillips, and his "literary man," Francis H. Underwood, who were proposing to establish a literary magazine. The arrangement of the table at that party was as follows:

Phillips

Emerson	Longfellow
Holmes	Motley
Lowell	Cabot

Underwood

The next autumn the magazine was duly launched—the third important enterprise of this kind in the annals of Boston publishing. *The North American Review*, it will be remembered, was established there in 1815, and the short-lived *Dial* in 1840. The new magazine was named, at the suggestion of Dr. Holmes, *The Atlantic Monthly;* Lowell was given the editorship; and within six months it was declared, on high authority, to be at that time "unquestionably the best maga-

zine in the English language." It represented far more than talent—it represented the best literary genius that the Atlantic states could boast, and that means the highest literary genius that America has yet produced. After four years Lowell resigned his editorship to James T. Fields, and a little later became joint editor with Charles Eliot Norton of *The North American Review;* but he continued to make contributions to the *Atlantic*, both in verse and in prose. At the beginning of the war his touching *Washers of the Shroud* appeared in it, and the second series of *The Biglow Papers* was published in its pages. The interest with which he followed the events of those terrible years was deepened and saddened by the loss of three nephews who fought on the side of the Union. There are pathetic references to them, both in *The Biglow Papers* and in the introduction of his essay *On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners.* At the close of the war, Lowell composed, in another white heat of poetic ardor, and recited at the Harvard Commemoration, his uneven but lofty *Commemoration Ode*, with its noble tribute to Abraham Lincoln, "Our Martyr-Chief," and its fervent, benediction-like close, beginning—

"Bow down, dear Land, for thou hast found release!"

But the chief product of this second period of Lowell's activity is to be sought in his prose essays. Late in life he was ripening into that scholarship of which he had seemed so careless in youth but for which his youth had been such an excellent preparation. In 1864 he published *Fireside Travels;* in 1870 and 1876 the two series of *Among My Books;* and in 1871 *My Study Windows*,—so named (the name was given by the publishers) perhaps because the study windows look not only in upon books but also out upon the garden and the busy world beyond. Most of the essays are critical and find their themes in English and foreign literature —Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Carlyle, Emerson. But there

Essays.

is a considerable range outside of literature, and the ordinary reader is likely to care more for the discursive essays on general themes, such as *My Garden Acquaintance*, *A Good Word for Winter*, and *Cambridge Thirty Years Ago*. It would be impossible to select from them any single passage that would give a fair idea of either their substance or their manner, so diversified is the one and so mutable the other. But to those who would know Lowell at his most centralized and best, — Lowell the man rather than Lowell the scholar, —the opening of the essay *On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners* may be commended as revealing something of the interior charm to which occasionally, thrusting aside more showy qualities, he ventured to give expression.

Last Period.

The field of Lowell's usefulness was to widen still further. As poet, as essayist, and as editor, he had served the cause both of American nationality and of American literature, and he was called upon to continue this double service in another capacity. In 1877 he was appointed Minister to Spain, where Irving had been sent more than thirty years before; and in 1880 he was transferred to the court of St. James. There he distinguished himself by tact, courtesy, and wisdom, and won the admiration of the English people. The disinterested character of their admiration was shown by their hearty applause of an act that called for no little courage from him—the delivery at Birmingham of an address on *Democracy*. Critics there had been, on this side of the water, outspoken in their censure of Lowell's friendliness for the English aristocracy, but they were silenced by this address. It was the mature declaration of his political faith, breathing the purest Americanism, and it constituted a fitting culmination to a life of consistent loyalty.

Returning to America in 1885, Lowell continued to deliver addresses, both at the Lowell Institute, and on public occasions

at various places when his strength would permit. He wrote poems, too, and published in 1888 *Heartsease and Rue*, a final volume. He died in 1891, at the age of seventy-two. On the publication of his letters by Professor C. E. Norton two years later—the most charming letters that American literature can yet show—something of the Lowell that was known to his friends and companions was revealed to the wider public, to whom his name was already as familiar as Longfellow's and Emerson's.

His Poetry.

In quantity, Lowell's poetry compares pretty evenly with Whittier's, considerably exceeding the meagre product of Bryant or Poe, but falling short of the fecundity of Longfellow. In character, too, it occupies a place between the narrow, exalted verse of the two former poets, and the easy charm and universal popularity of the latter's. Lowell was widely popular, almost from the first. The magazines were quite as eager to publish his work as they were to publish Longfellow's. But that he satisfied some temporary craving of the people rather than any perennial hunger is shown by the fact that his collected and reprinted works never sold so widely. Longfellow's books lay on every family table, and the family, moreover, was familiar with their contents. Lowell's name was almost as well known, but his books not so intimately. On the other hand, while readers of more discernment were inevitably attracted by his many masterly qualities of both mind and heart, it cannot be said that he ever made upon them quite the same depth and intensity of impression that was made by Bryant and by Poe, or even by Whittier at his best. The variety and the high quality of his work in other fields than poetry, however, have helped him to a position of greater conspicuousness than theirs. In any list of American writers given off-hand, Lowell's name is pretty sure to be found near the first.

Although, as just intimated, few of Lowell's minor poems have fixed themselves indelibly in the minds of readers, all will concede to them sterling qualities—the devout worship of nature, for instance, that informs such poems as *To the Dandelion* and *Pictures from Appledore*, the human tenderness and pathos of *The First Snow-Fall* and *After the Burial*, the Greek beauty of *Rhœcus*, or the equally compelling if more modern charm of a poem like *Hebe:*—

"I saw the twinkle of white feet,
I saw the flash of robes descending;
Before her ran an influence fleet
That bowed my heart like barley bending."

Doubtless Lowell's pure poetry—and by this is meant poetry written for poetry's sake—is found at its best in the longer *Vision of Sir Launfal.* It is a poem such as a man must write in youth or not at all—a poem of boundless faith and high ideals, and all-including worship of beauty and purity. And the poem is for youth: teachers know that it is a positive moral force in our schools to-day. We are scarcely willing to accept it, however, as a product of high poetic genius. It is conceived so much in the artistic spirit, makes so much of form, that we cannot, as in the case of Emerson's *Threnody*, waive the tests of art; and yet it is defective in art. It is marred by haste and carelessness, it has faulty figures and discordant lines. It was not to be expected, perhaps, that Dr. Holmes should take kindly to its metre—the "rattlety bang sort of verse," he called it, that was revived in Coleridge's *Christabel.* But *Christabel* is everywhere musical; it contains no such lines as

"Hang my idle armor up on the wall,"—
"And through the dark arch a charger sprang,"—
"And the wanderer is welcome to the hall."

This last line may be read in three, five, or six feet, but scarcely in four, the number it should have. Even the first four lines

of the famous description of June, which as a whole is scarcely to be surpassed for intoxicating rapture, are confusing in imagery and unsatisfying in rhythm. Fine as the poem is, it is not quite fine enough. It needed, in addition to its genuine inspiration, the perfect art of a Tennyson, and it lacks that art. Lowell was confessedly indolent in such matters, but it seems more than likely that the defect was an inherent one; he never acquired the perfect art. Late in life he wrote his longest and most ambitious poem, *The Cathedral*. It was as distinctive as a poem could well be—no one but Lowell could have written it. It was brilliant, profound, stimulating; but it was overweighted with thought, and the adornments of wit were made to supply the place of the adornments of art. Besides, the early spontaneity was missing. At its best the poem was sensuous and even passionate, but it was almost never fresh or simple. Emerson, who was asked to review it, refused, seeing too clearly that the Muses' well had ceased to flow and that the poet "had to pump."

Greatest after all are his occasional poems—*The Biglow Papers* and the *Commemoration Ode*. Lowell had a rare knack of penetrating to the heart of men and events. He saw the universal beneath the local, the eternal beneath the temporal. And so out of a country courtship he made a national poem, and created lasting types of character out of an unscrupulous politician, a cowardly Congressman, a fawning candidate, a time-serving editor. In spite of the fact that he was a scholar he almost paralleled the achievement of Burns and became the mouth-piece of a clan. *The Biglow Papers* are Yankee to the core, perpetuating the dialect with its racy idiom, and the character with its shrewd wit and homely wisdom. As satire they rank with the best in literature, and they rise above most satire in the manliness of their tone and the sacredness of their cause. The *Commemoration Ode*, too, though marred by some

of the same defects as *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, is the best poem evoked by the Civil War and its consequences. It is Northern, yet national,—patriotic with a patriotism chastened by sorrow into something inexpressibly noble.

His Prose.

Lowell's abundant wit and his broad and sufficient, even if not remarkably deep or sound, scholarship, show to best advantage in his prose. He read much and remembered all, and could marshal his knowledge at any moment to serve his immediate ends. The richness of his prose, both in substance and style, is amazing. The variety of knowledges he lays under contribution for the illustration and adornment of his ideas exceeds, one is almost tempted to say, that of Macaulay and Carlyle combined. There is one sentence in his essay on *Swinburne's Tragedies* that draws on Greek, Latin, philology, psychology, optics, inebriation, and Mississippi steamboat navigation. The sentence just before it has a technical term from metrics, the sentence before that a figure from free-masonry, and the sentence before that a technical term from the Old French law. Every one who knows Lowell's prose knows, too, that this is scarcely an extreme instance. The allusions are often so profuse as to discourage all but very well-informed readers, while for those who can understand and enjoy them the reading is turned into a kind of intellectual debauch. Allusion is packed within allusion, metaphor within metaphor, like a Chinese wooden-egg. Or, to change the figure, his fancies loom up one behind the other like the roofs, towers, and steeples of a distant city. You never know when you have found all that is hidden in one of Lowell's pages.

Again, his style is a style of infinite paraphrase. The commonest ideas take on most fanciful disguises and seldom does anything reappear without changing its form. Holland gin becomes a "Batavian elixir," a negro minstrel an "Ethiopian serenader;" a coat of whitewash is a "candent baptism;"

a lying tramp is a "beggar," a "vagrant," a "heroic man on an imaginary journey," a "seeker of the unattainable," an "abridged edition of the Wandering Jew;" the barber who makes a slip of the shears "oversteps the boundaries of strict tonsorial prescription and makes a notch through which the phrenological developments can be distinctly seen"! Moreover, Lowell sees the humorous side of everything, and wit sparkles everywhere—sometimes indeed to the offence of good taste. He is an inveterate punster. It would be difficult to find anywhere else in the same space as large a number of good puns as may be found in his published letters. But when we find the same sort of thing in serious essays, we cannot approve. Wit is for the passing moment and looks ghastly graven on a monument.

True, these are lordly, generous qualities, and they have the additional grace of coming unsought; for Lowell does not strive to be affluent—he cannot avoid being so. Mr. Stedman has somewhere said, speaking of poetry, that "Lowell has sprinkled the whole subject with diamond dust." So he has sprinkled everything: to be spendthrift is his function. But while we envy him his brilliant gifts we cannot help wishing that he had learned and exercised greater restraint, or that he had cultivated more sedulously certain finer qualities. Now and then he curbs his high spirits and tempers his exuberance with a quiet, pensive strain. But in general the temptations to adornment and to mirth are too strong for him. The result shows in that want of fine texture and harmonious tone for which his work is often criticised. Nothing, for example, could well be better than the first paragraph of the essay *On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners;* and, so far as a sense for harmony of style is concerned, few things could be worse than the fourteenth paragraph of the same essay. The balances of dignity, refinement, grace, pathos, and all the qualities that make for

beauty and elevation, are too often wanting. In these things the great English humorists of his century, Lamb and De Quincey, are both his superiors.

Somewhat similar defects attach to the substance of his essays. The discursive essays, those that pretend to little beyond entertainment, make some of the most delightful reading in modern letters. It is impossible to resist their varied charms, all going back to the author's magnetic personality. And much the same is true of the more serious essays. But these latter suffer in their lack of centrality, of a guiding principle and a definite purpose. Lowell's best poetry came of profound convictions; but when later in life he turned to the writing of prose, he was not inspired by the same sort of convictions—he wrote as a professional journalist, rather because he found that he could than because he felt that he must. Only perhaps, in one or two addresses of his last years, like *Democracy*, is it possible to discern behind the written or spoken utterance the kind of consecration that has lifted into such clear light the names of Carlyle, Emerson, Ruskin, and Arnold. His criticism at its best is constantly in danger of degenerating into witticism; at its worst it is unsympathetic and unsound, as when it confronts certain pet aversions like Petrarch, Swinburne, or Thoreau.

To quarrel with the method, however, is not to condemn the man. Lowell rarely professes to set up standards—he will not sink the poet in the critic. If we will accept him for what he is, a kind of eighteenth century critic fortified with nineteenth century learning, browsing in the fields of literature when and where he pleases, resolved to like with a zest and to dislike with a zest, and even to trample under foot what is not to his taste, we shall get our profit from him. His insight always keeps pace with his sympathy. A late writer on style, Mr. Walter Raleigh, has said: "The main business

of criticism, after all, is not to legislate, but to raise the dead." Just so far as this is true, Lowell is a great critic. The writers whom he loves he makes live again. Taken all in all, therefore, as critic and as poet, we know pretty clearly how to estimate him,—not, perhaps, as our greatest scholar, certainly not as our greatest man of letters, but as our best example of the two combined. Or if Longfellow and Holmes be allowed to share in this pre-eminence, we may yet add to Lowell's credit a devotion to national and moral principles like that of Whittier, which joins to the breadth of his character a depth they can scarcely claim.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, 1809-1894

Oliver Wendell Holmes was another native of Cambridge, who, however, opened his eyes upon the beauty of its elms nearly ten years before Lowell. He was born in the prolific first decade of the century,—in the year 1809, made memorable on both sides of the Atlantic by the births of Lincoln, Poe, Tennyson, Darwin, and Gladstone. His grandfather was a captain in the "Old French War" and a surgeon in the Revolutionary army. His father, Abiel Holmes, was a Congregational minister at Cambridge and an author in a modest way. On his mother's side—the Wendells—he was of Dutch descent. On this side, too, he counted among his ancestors that "tenth Muse" who sprang up in America nearly two centuries before, Mistress Anne Bradstreet; but as she was only one of his sixty-four great-great-great-great-grandparents, the Bradstreet poetry that flowed in his veins, thin to begin with, must have been but the weakest trace—a homeopathic high-dilution that the Doctor, with all his faith in heredity, would probably have laughed to scorn.

Nativity.

There is almost nothing of note to be recorded of his boy-

hood, nor indeed of any period of his life. He was brought up very simply in the old gambrel-roofed house, half parsonage, half farmhouse, described in *The Poet at the Breakfast Table;* heard the rustic Yankee dialect used by the hired "help" of the family—"nater" for nature, "haowsen" for houses, and "musicianers" for musicians; read the *New England Primer*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Pope's Homer, and such poems of Gray, Cowper, Bryant, Drake, etc., as were to be found in school books; showed some ingenuity in working with tools; went to a "dame's school" first, and then to Phillips Academy at Andover (see *The School-Boy*), whence he should have become a minister like his father but did not; and finally to Harvard, where he was undecided whether to look toward "law or physick," but very decided that authorship was not suited to that particular meridian. The class of '29, in which he graduated, while not to be compared for literary genius with the Bowdoin class of '25, was one of Harvard's most famous classes. James Freeman Clarke, over whom Holmes was chosen class poet, was one of its members, and the future author of *America* was another—the youngster whom "fate tried to conceal by naming him Smith." The class not long after began to hold annual dinners, and Holmes was regularly called upon to furnish an ode for the occasion. It was on the thirtieth anniversary that he wrote and recited the familiar poem, "Has there any old fellow got mixed with the boys." After graduation he studied law for a while and then turned to medicine and surgery—a choice which made it advisable for him to spend some time in the hospitals of Europe. He accordingly passed two years in study at Paris, travelling a little about Europe during vacations. The year 1836 found him equipped with his doctor's degree and established in an office at Boston. Two years later he received an appointment to the Professorship of Anatomy at Dartmouth College, and he

Youth and Manhood.

lectured there for several terms. In 1840 he married. In 1847 he was appointed Professor of Anatomy and Physiology in the Harvard Medical School, and he remained on the Harvard Faculty for thirty-five years. As he gave instruction also in microscopy and psychology he used to say that he occupied, not a professor's chair, but a whole settee. In these duties he found his life work, less as a practitioner than as an investigator, teacher, and writer in his chosen profession. Some of his contributions to medical science were of the highest value, one in particular establishing the contagious character of a certain fever.

Early Verse.

Until the launching of the *Atlantic Monthly*, well after the middle of the century, literature played but a minor part in Holmes's life. He delivered a course of lectures on the English poets before the Lowell Institute, and he also went out occasionally, like Emerson and Lowell, on the Lyceum platform. In his college days he had written verses for girls' albums, and he had been class poet; but it was only in the year after his graduation, when he was asked by the undergraduates to contribute to a college paper, that his verses went into type, and then, he says, he had his first attack of "lead-poisoning." It was in September of that year, 1830, that he chanced to read in a newspaper of the proposal of the Navy Department to dismantle the frigate Constitution, which had done such good service in 1812, but which was then lying, old and unseaworthy, in the navy yard at Charleston. He wrote at once with a lead-pencil on a scrap of paper the stirring and indignant stanzas, *Old Ironsides*, and sent them to the Boston *Daily Advertiser*. They were copied in all the papers of the country, and the feeling aroused was so strong that the Secretary of the Navy, who of course had been guilty of nothing but a want of sentiment, allowed the "tattered ensign" to remain and the frig-

ate was converted into a school-ship. And thus Oliver Wendell Holmes, a meek-minded, modest-mannered, undersized law student just turned twenty-one, became measurably noted as a poet. Six years later, when he began his medical practice in Boston, he published a small volume of verse, containing of course *Old Ironsides*, together with a few such ever-delightful poems as *The Dilemma* and *My Aunt*, and best of all, *The Last Leaf*. This was the year of Emerson's *Nature*, the year before Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, and three years before Longfellow's *Voices of the Night*. From this time on the poetic record was a slight but steady one. Every year brought its occasions and inspiration for verse, and every decade, more or less, found the verse gathered into a volume, which was treasured by the Doctor's many friends and plundered freely by school-readers for the sake of declaiming school children all over the land. If this was fame, the name of Holmes already belonged on the roll of American men of letters.

But Holmes, while he had a genuine gift of song, was no such persistent singer as Longfellow, and no such poet by native compulsion as Bryant, Poe, and Whittier, and so he reached almost the age of fifty without feeling that he had any particular claim on the reading public, or the reading public on him. Then, in 1857, came the publisher's dinner described some pages back, and the resulting *Atlantic Monthly*, which he had the good fortune to name. Lowell would accept the editorship of the magazine only on condition that Holmes would contribute, and the result was *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* papers—papers that did more than any other one thing to establish the high character of the magazine and to assure its success. He was before the public in a new rôle, and one in which he never afterward lost favor, no matter how often he assumed it. It is rarely that talk, of the breakfast table or whatever kind,

"*The Breakfast Table Series.*"

looks well on paper. Many an eloquent speaker, and many a brilliant converser, has taken up the pen in vain. Dr. Holmes was a really brilliant and witty talker. He was a member of the famous Saturday Club, which still exists, and which, whether it grew out of that publisher's dinner or whether it originated with Emerson and several admirers who occasionally dined together at the Parker House, became a fixed feature of Boston literary life in the early days of the *Atlantic* and gathered into its coterie almost the whole galaxy of New England wit, learning, and genius. Of this galaxy the bright particular stars were Lowell and Holmes, and Holmes doubtless shone with the rarer lustre. The club became the centre of his social existence, one of the fixed joys of his life, and without him it would have been deprived of one of its best excuses for being. Now, the kind of talk in which he delighted there and of which he showed himself so easily master, he succeeded in transferring, almost without loss, to paper. To be admitted to the presence of such a talker as he was, was the chance of a lifetime, and readers of the *Autocrat* became suddenly aware that this chance had come, as it were, to their doors.

"Don't I read up various matters to talk about at this table or elsewhere?—No, that is the last thing I would do. I will tell you my rule. Talk about those subjects you have had long in your mind, and listen to what others say about subjects you have studied but recently. Knowledge and timber shouldn't be much used till they are seasoned. . . .

"What do I mean by the real talkers?—Why, the people with fresh ideas, of course, and plenty of good warm words to dress them in. Facts always yield the place of honor, in conversation, to thoughts about facts; but if a false note is uttered, down comes the finger on the key and the man of facts asserts his true dignity. I have known three of these men of facts, at least, who were always formidable,—and one of them was tyrannical.

"Yes, a man sometimes makes a grand appearance on a particular occasion, but these men knew something about almost every-

thing, and never made mistakes.—He? *Veneers* in first-rate style. The mahogany scales off now and then in spots, and then you see the cheap light stuff.—I found —— very fine in conversational information, the other day, when we were in company. The talk ran upon mountains. He was wonderfully well acquainted with the leading facts about the Andes, the Apennines, and the Appalachians; he had nothing in particular to say about Ararat, Ben Nevis, and various other mountains that were mentioned. By and by some Revolutionary anecdote came up, and he showed singular familiarity with the lives of the Adamses, and gave many details relating to Major André. A point of Natural History being suggested, he gave an excellent account of the air-bladder of fishes. He was very full upon the subject of agriculture, but retired from the conversation when horticulture was introduced in the discussion. So he seemed well acquainted with the geology of anthracite, but did not pretend to know anything of other kinds of coal. There was something so odd about the extent and limitations of his knowledge, that I suspected all at once what might be the meaning of it, and waited till I got an opportunity. —Have you seen the 'New American Cyclopaedia?' said I.—I have, he replied; I received an early copy.—How far does it go?—He turned red, and answered,—To Araguay.—Oh, said I to myself,—not quite so far as Ararat;—that is the reason he knew nothing about it; but he must have read all the rest straight through, and, if he can remember what is in this volume until he has read all those that are to come, he will know more than I ever thought he would."

But here, too, as in the case of Lowell's essays, it is practically impossible to give by quotation any fair idea of the work. It is not simply that there is an embarrassment of riches, tempting one to quote from whatever page he may open, but that a good part of the charm lies in the endless variety of the matter, a quality which cannot be exhibited in an extract. The author turns lightly from subject to subject, always suggesting something new or illuminating something old, and touching each as he passes with his humor or his pathos. Perhaps George William Curtis has best described it—"the restless hovering of that brilliant talk over every topic, fancy, feeling, fact; a humming-bird sipping the one honeyed drop from

every flower." The humor is as unfailing as Lowell's and is generally of a finer quality. Poetry, too, was not barred from his scheme, and many of his best poems are to be found interspersed among the pages of *The Autocrat.* One is *The Deacon's Masterpiece*, the tale of the wonderful "one-hoss shay;" another is the allegory of *The Chambered Nautilus*, which was Dr. Holmes's own favorite among his poems—a notable poem, indeed, in every respect, in beauty of imagery, in construction, and in the lyric sweep and lofty aspiration of its often quoted final stanza,—

> "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
> As the swift seasons roll!
> Leave thy low-vaulted past!
> Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
> Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
> Till thou at length art free,
> Leaving thine outgrown shell by Life's unresting sea!"

The Autocrat had once declared that he thought himself "fortunate in having the Poet and the Professor for intimates;" and in good time the Poet and the Professor were allowed to appear. *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* began quaintly enough: "The question is whether there is anything left for me, the Professor, to suck out of creation, after my lively friend (the Autocrat) has had his straw in the bung-hole of the universe." But creation is pretty extensive, and so seemed to be Dr. Holmes's ability to draw on its stores. This was in 1859. Thirteen years later the Poet took his seat at the breakfast table, and still the universe showed no signs of being sucked dry. The second and third tappings lacked a little of the pristine flavor, that was all. The Professor, for example, was a trifle grave and over-given to theological discussions; yet the pathetic death-scene of the Little Gentleman in that series is one of Holmes's finest passages.

Running through the *Autocrat* papers was a very slender thread of romance which bound them into a kind of unity. It was natural then that Holmes, having discovered his power and facility in prose, should enter the highest field of prose art by attempting romance proper. *Elsie Venner* was published in 1861, *The Guardian Angel* in 1867, and *A Mortal Antipathy* in 1885. These stories are commonly called novels, but notwithstanding their elaborate character studies and their realistic details they contain so much of mystery approaching the supernatural that they are rather to be classified as romances. Dr. Holmes had a deep interest in the problems of inherited characteristics—an interest which sometimes came out in his poems, as in the dainty *Dorothy Q.*—and he made this largely the foundation of his romances. But the scientist's, and, it should be added, the moralist's interest in the analysis of problems interfered sadly with the romancer's art. Yet books that are so filled with Dr. Holmes's personality, no one can call failures. *The Guardian Angel*, indeed, is one of the books that no one who begins will lay aside, and it is not unlikely to be taken up for a second reading. *Elsie Venner*, the story of the girl of the serpent charms, cannot be accounted so successful, though it has a profound spiritual significance and it has been more widely read.

Romances.

Holmes's intellect remained bright and his pen was kept active into extreme old age. He wrote memoirs of Motley and of Emerson, medical essays, literary essays, and poems. He made a second visit to Europe, with his daughter, in 1886, when he was honored with the doctor's degree by the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Edinburgh. The story of the visit was written out in *Our Hundred Days in Europe*. In 1890 he published his last volume, *Over the Tea-Cups*, another work somewhat in the vein of the Breakfast Table Series. In the meantime he had continued to

Last Years.

write those poems which, from 1851 onward, he had written every year for the meeting of the class of '29. Toward the end, as the circle became smaller and smaller, the poems and even their titles grew most pathetic: *Before the Curfew* (1882), *A Loving-Cup Song* (1883), *The Girdle of Friendship* (1884), *The Lyre of Anacreon* (1885), *The Old Tune, Thirty-sixth Variation* (1886), *The Broken Circle* (1887), *The Angel Thief* (1888), *After the Curfew* (1889). "*After the Curfew*," wrote Samuel May to F. J. Garrison, "was positively *the last*. 'Farewell! I let the curtain fall.' The curtain never rose again for '29. We met once more—a year later—at Parker's. But three were present, Smith, Holmes, and myself. No poem —*very quiet*—something very like tears. The following meetings—all at Dr. H.'s house—were quiet, social, *talking* meetings. . . . At one of these meetings four were present, all the survivors but one; and there was more *general* talk. But never another Class Poem." The class-mates were nearly all gone. Gone, too, were his literary co-workers, Longfellow, Emerson, Lowell, and Whittier. Holmes had actually lived to be

"The last leaf upon the tree."

He died October the seventh, 1894.

A Writer of Occasional and Humorous Verse.

"Rhymes of an Hour" is the title Dr. Holmes once gave to a little group of his poems. The title was not given with any false assumption of modesty: it was a real characterization of what he knew to be trivial and transitory verse. On every public or semi-public occasion which could be enlivened or dignified by a special poem, and there were very many such in and about Boston, Dr. Holmes was likely to be asked to furnish the poem. Such a position is a trying one at best, but one, fortunately, to which only men with some sense of humor are often called. The Doctor rarely refused to respond; so that nearly one-half of his

verse is of this occasional character. He knew very well that the verse was not "booked for immortality." He allowed it to stand in his collected works along with a good deal of youthful nonsense, like *The Spectre Pig*, which a poet who took himself more seriously would, out of jealousy for his fame, have suppressed. Yet to be able to write good occasional verse is a rare accomplishment, even if not a very high one. Our poets who have tried to write odes for great and serious occasions, centennial and the like, have seldom succeeded, the chief exceptions being Emerson's *Concord Hymn*, which was modestly meant, and Lowell's *Commemoration Ode*, behind which there was deep personal feeling. In general, Holmes wrote for much lighter occasions, and it must be said that he succeeded. Whether it was Bryant's seventieth birthday, or Longfellow's departure for Europe, or a dinner to General Grant, or the dedication of a monument, or the founding of a hospital, the poem was freely given and was sure to be worthy of the occasion. Sometimes it rose to real distinction. The series of over forty poems written for the reunions of his class becomes impressive in its length and modulation—one song, as it were, in many keys. *At the Saturday Club* gives us the finest pictures we shall ever get of the real Longfellow, Agassiz, Hawthorne, and Emerson, as they were among their associates. Horace wrote occasional poems that are immortal: Holmes, once or twice, came near it.

Light verse was clearly his forte. His frankly humorous poems, like *The Deacon's Masterpiece*, *Parson Turell's Legacy*, and *How the Old Horse Won the Bet*, have always held a high place. In the so-called society verse, that professedly trivial verse on trivial subjects, which demands such a light touch and which yet runs often close to seriousness, he has had no competitor in America unless it be Mr. Aldrich, and only one forerunner—the almost forgotten Philip Freneau. Poems of

this class are *The First Fan*, *La Grisette*, *Our Yankee Girls*, *The Dilemma*, *My Aunt*, and that playfully reverent poem on an old portrait of one of his Quincy ancestors in her girlhood—*Dorothy Q.*

A poet's final place, however, is most likely to be determined by his serious work. Holmes's entirely serious work is not much in amount, and it includes no long poems. There are a few patriotic poems, but he left nothing better in this kind than the declamatory *Old Ironsides*. He struck a surer note in the tender themes of *Under the Violets* and *The Voiceless;* the latter, indeed, has attained almost as wide a familiarity as any of Longfellow's lyrics:—

A Genuine Lyrist.

"We count the broken lyres that rest
Where the sweet wailing singers slumber,
But o'er their silent sister's breast
The wild-flowers who will stoop to number?
A few can touch the magic string,
And noisy Fame is proud to win them:—
Alas for those that never sing,
But die with all their music in them!"

But surest of all in their hold on the future are *The Last Leaf* and *The Chambered Nautilus*. Which is the greater, it is idle to ask. This distinction may be noted. *The Chambered Nautilus*, with all its lofty reach and perfect finish, is a meditative poem not materially different in character from half a hundred other famous lyrics in our language. On the other hand, *The Last Leaf* is like an instantaneous photograph that has caught something never to be caught again. We prize it because it is a unique addition to literature, unlike anything save its imitations:—

"I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door,

And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
With his cane."

It is a picture only, a "silhouette" Mr. Stedman has happily called it, but the quaint staccato movement throws the picture into such sharp relief that it takes on the very attributes of life.

Of his prose perhaps enough has been said. It was the prose that made Holmes distinctly a man of letters; it was the prose that absorbed the best literary energies of his mature years and possibly kept him from producing any poetic masterpiece such as Whittier wrote in *Snow-Bound*. But *The Autocrat* is masterpiece enough. At one time or another Holmes has been compared to most of the great writers of discursive prose in modern literature, and there is probably some measure of truth in each comparison. He remains peculiarly our own—even less than our own, almost to provincialism. Concentrated New Englandism, with only the Puritan element subtracted, is Dr. Holmes. But he belongs to a company that is of many nationalities, a company of sage philosophers and shrewd humorists, who, under cover of giving amusement, afford unsuspected intellectual stimulus and add to the practical wisdom of their generation.

A Philosopher in Disguise.

MINOR POETRY AND MISCELLANEOUS PROSE

As we approach our own time the distinction between major and minor men becomes more and more difficult to draw. The next generation may overturn our judgments. Even now, as we look back upon the nineteenth century, we seem to see Bryant, for instance, receding from the eminence which he once held into a position of chiefly historical importance. And we see Thoreau, for another instance, coming gradually into a wider acceptance, though still very far from holding a secure

place among writers of the first order. Even more doubtful is the position of one for whom a special criticism must yet be reserved—Walt Whitman. But if names like these can be advanced to a conspicuous position only with caution, it seems pretty clear that such a position cannot be conceded to any of the many yet unnamed. At the same time it is to be remembered that a few, as Bayard Taylor in poetry and Hale and Curtis in prose, have done work that is not far below the enduring kind. It is these and their fellow craftsmen that we must now endeavor to view in such perspective as the criticism of forty years or less enables us to obtain.

Among the poets of New England, as it happens, the distinction between major and minor is sharply enough drawn. The men of real talent but of relatively weak poetic impulse seem to have been willing to resign the office of singing to Emerson and Whittier and the Cambridge group, pursuing for the most part other occupations. William Wetmore Story and Thomas William Parsons, both of whom were born in the same year as Lowell, were examples of such men. They at least did their share toward sustaining the reputation which Boston has held since the time of Washington Allston, as a centre of literary scholarship and art. Story, a native of Salem and a graduate of Harvard, spent only his early manhood at Boston; the latter half of his life was passed at Rome, where he devoted himself chiefly to sculpture. Among his works in sculpture are a statue of his father, Judge Story, and a bust of his friend, Lowell. Several of Lowell's early essays were written in the form of letters addressed to "My Dear Storg" (*i. e.*, Story). His writings include poems, a drama, a novel, and miscellaneous prose. Parsons was born at Boston and spent most of his life there. A period of travel and study in Italy resulted in his admirable rhymed translation

W. W. Story, 1819-1895.
T. W. Parsons, 1819-1892.
C. E. Norton, 1827-

(1843, extended in 1867) of some cantos of Dante's Divine Comedy. His original poetry is grave and noble, and his *Lines on a Bust of Dante* take rank, with scholars at least, as an American classic. Professor Charles Eliot Norton, of Harvard, though not a poet, may also be mentioned here as an associate of the Cambridge poets and himself a scholar and translator of Dante and an authority on art.

To these may be added several writers of occasional poems. As far back as 1832, Samuel Francis Smith, a Boston clergyman and a classmate of Holmes, wrote *America* ("My Country, 'tis of Thee"), in which patriotic and religious sentiments combine to make a worthy national hymn. Nearly thirty years later another hymn that has risen to the distinction of being called national was written by Mrs. Julia Ward Howe. She was a native of New York who at the time of her marriage took up her residence in Boston and wrote as a journalist there in the interest of the abolition of slavery and other reforms. Her *Battle Hymn of the Republic* (1861) was inspired by seeing the troops in the camps near Washington marching to the song of *John Brown's Body*. Other poets who might here be mentioned—John G. Saxe, for instance, the Vermont lawyer and humorist, or Lucy Larcom, the Massachusetts mill-girl and writer for young people—are fast being forgotten.

S. F. Smith, 1808-1895.

Julia Ward Howe, 1819-

Of the New England writers of prose, two or three who have outlived the century and with it most of their early associates, are still rather to be regarded as belonging to the old school. One is Edward Everett Hale, who, in his long career as a Boston clergyman, has managed not only to identify himself with many philanthropic projects but also to produce a large amount of miscellaneous writing—historical, fictitious,

E. E. Hale, 1822-

T. W. Higginson, 1823-

D. G. Mitchell, 1822-

moral, and discursive. His widely known patriotic tale, *The Man Without a Country*, was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1863. Another veteran is Thomas Wentworth Higginson, also, in his early life, a Massachusetts clergyman. He was an ardent opponent of slavery and served in the war as colonel of the first colored regiment. His works comprise essays, biographies, histories, poems, and romances. Yet a third is Donald Grant Mitchell, of Connecticut, who, under the name of "Ik Marvel," published *Reveries of a Bachelor* (1850) and *Dream Life* (1851). These "contemplative views of life from the slippered ease of the chimney-corner" were among the most popular books of the middle of the century, but their tender vein of sentiment finds little place in an age of the scientific passion and "the strenuous life." All three of these men have of late published reminiscences—Dr. Hale in *James Russell Lowell and His Friends*, Colonel Higginson in *Old Cambridge*, and Mr. Mitchell in *American Lands and Letters*—volumes that are peculiarly rich in anecdotes and other helps to the understanding of literary life and character in the East before and during the war.

Comparable in many ways to this secondary New England group was a group of poets and prose writers whose work was done in the region that centres in New York and Philadelphia. There, however, the poets that followed immediately in the wake of the "Knickerbockers" mentioned in an earlier chapter rose to rather more prominence than the secondary poets of New England, for in this region there was no such overshadowing by great names, Poe having passed early from the stage and Bryant never having cultivated very actively his poetic gift. Four of these poets, of nearly the same age, were closely associated —Thomas Buchanan Read, George Henry Boker, Bayard Taylor, and Richard Henry Stoddard.

Read and Boker were chiefly identified with Philadelphia.

The former was a painter of some note, and among his paintings are a portrait of Sheridan and his horse, and one of Longfellow's children. He published, from 1847 onward, various volumes of poems, such as *The New Pastoral*, sketches of emigrant life from middle Pennsylvania to the Mississippi, and *The Wagoner of the Alleghanies*, a poem of Revolutionary days. He is best known, however, by the short poems, *Sheridan's Ride*, and *Drifting* ("My soul to-day Is far away"). Boker was a dramatist, and virtually the only American writer of plays that have met with favor, both as literature and on the stage, since John Howard Payne, whose *Brutus* (1818) and many other plays were little more than adaptations. Boker's *Calaynos* (1848) and *Francesca da Rimini* (1856) are blank verse tragedies of a very respectable kind. Among his minor poems are *The Ballad of Sir John Franklin*, *The Black Regiment*, and *Dirge for a Soldier* ("Close his eyes; his work is done!").

T. B. Read, 1822-1872.
G. H. Boker, 1823-1890.

Easily chief of this group and demanding therefore a more extended consideration was Bayard Taylor, who has sometimes indeed been classed with our poets of the first order. He, too, was a Pennsylvanian, though most of his journalistic work was done in connection with the papers of New York. He began life as a printer's apprentice with two ambitions—to travel and to become a poet. His first volume of poems appeared when he was but nineteen; and in the same year (1844) he began his travels through Germany and other countries of Europe—on foot, partly because he had not the means to go otherwise. His *Views Afoot*, a prose record of his experiences, published in 1846 with a preface by Willis, fixed his reputation and entirely cleared his way to the desired life of travel and letters. He was among the gold diggings of California as corresponding editor of the New York *Tribune*, in 1849; returned through Mexico in 1850; and in

Bayard Taylor, 1825-1878.

1851 went again to Europe, penetrating thence south to Sudan and the White Nile and east to India, China, and Japan. Several years later he travelled through the north of Europe. During the Civil War he was made secretary of the legation to Russia. He afterward visited many out-of-the-way places in Europe, including Iceland. In 1878 he was appointed United States Minister to Germany and died there in the same year. "He travelled pen in his hand," said his friend Boker; "he delivered course after course of lectures in the brief nightly pauses of his long winter journeys; he wrote novels, he wrote editorials, criticisms, letters, and miscellaneous articles for the magazines and the newspapers; he toiled as few men have toiled at any profession or for any end, and he wore himself out and perished prematurely of hard and sometimes bitter work." That, with all his accomplishment, he quite realized his literary ambition, would be too much to say. He had an exalted conception of the office of poet, believing that poetry, or pure imaginative creation, was the highest goal toward which a man could strive, and he strove toward it with a heroism that compels admiration. Hence, perhaps, the fervent encomiums of his many friends. But his friends must often have felt, as he doubtless in time came to feel himself, that his work was without that final something imparted only by the genius which stands above both consecrated endeavor and noble ideals. If men like Emerson have had the blissful unconsciousness of genius, men like Taylor have had the bitter consciousness of a want of genius. Yet Taylor became a poet and a writer of note; in the days of his productiveness he had the warm admiration of many critical readers; and he left to his credit a body of work of wide range and superior quality. His prose sketches go to swell the English literature of travel that has been accumulating since the days of Sir John Mandeville. His dramas, written in his later years,

—*The Masque of the Gods*, *The Prophet*, and *Prince Deukalion*, —are the best specimens of the closet drama that America has produced, not excepting Longfellow's. Poems like *Lars, a Pastoral of Norway*, the *Gettysburg Ode*, and the *National Ode* (read at the Centennial Exposition on Independence Day), are worthy achievements. And there are two or three short poems which have won a wide popular approval, such as the *Bedouin Song*, or the *Song of the Camp* with its familiar close,—

"The bravest are the tenderest,
The loving are the daring."

Taylor, moreover, was one of that remarkable group of American translators—Bryant, Longfellow, Taylor, Cranch, Parsons, and Norton—who between 1867 and 1872 gave us translations of the great poems of Homer, Vergil, Dante, and Goethe. Taylor's version of the two parts of Goethe's *Faust*, in the metres of the original, was published in 1871-72. It is perhaps enough to say of this that it is the standard English translation of *Faust*, and it seems likely that Taylor's fame in the future will rest more securely upon it than upon his original work.

R. H. Stoddard, 1825-

Richard Henry Stoddard is the fourth, and the last to survive, of this group of poets. He was born in Massachusetts, but went to New York in boyhood, where he got his education in the public schools, and, in the intervals of work in an iron foundry, read poetry with avidity. Later in life he became an editor, and worked in more or less intimacy with Read, Boker, and Taylor, and the somewhat younger Edmund Clarence Stedman. His earliest poems were published in 1849; volumes of more note were *Songs of Summer*, 1856, *The King's Bell*, 1862, and *The Book of the East*, 1871. The last is rich in oriental coloring. Stoddard has never been a "popular" poet, but has been known to all critical lovers of poetry as a writer whose calling is high and whose instincts are sure. Like the English Landor, he has united

in his touch rare delicacy and strength. The former quality is most apparent in such a work, very Greek in spirit, as *The Fisher and Charon*, and in many a dainty lyric like *The Divan* and the imaginative *Persian Songs* and *Tartar Songs;* the latter, in his stately hymns and odes—*Abraham Lincoln*, *Hymn to the Sea*, and *The Dead Master*. The last poem, written in memory of Bryant, whom Stoddard greatly admired, contains much of the severe majesty of Bryant's best blank verse.

Song Writers and Songs.

New York had still her song-writers, too, though none so worthy even as the earlier Payne, Woodworth, and Morris. The Cary sisters, originally from Ohio, published various volumes, largely of verse marked by grace, melody, and religious sentiment. Alice (1820-1871) was the more prolific writer; Phœbe (1824-1871) was the author of the widely known hymn, *Nearer Home*. Stephen Collins Foster (1826-1864), who was born at Pittsburg, was a music composer and the author of a large number of idealized negro melodies. His *Old Folks at Home* ("The Suwanee River"), *My Old Kentucky Home*, *Nellie Was a Lady*, *Massa's in the Cold Ground*, etc., have passed into universal currency and almost take rank with folk-songs.* Minor balladists elsewhere were Thomas Dunn English (1819-) of Philadelphia, author of *Ben Bolt*, and Coates Kinney (1826-) of Cincinnati, author of *The Rain upon the Roof*.

Prose writers who managed to struggle clear of the distractions that beset a commercial and cosmopolitan community, it is not easy to find in New York and vicinity after the early part of the century. Irving and Cooper had no worthy successors. Even the poets, from Bryant and Poe down to Willis and Taylor, suffered from the strenuous journalism, political

*The authorship of the genuine negro folk-songs and hymns, like *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, and *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, is of course untraceable. *Dixie* was composed in 1859 by Daniel D. Emmett, who was born in Ohio (1814) of Southern parents.

and other, into which they found themselves plunged; and into this journalism the writers of prose were one and all lured, so that the history of the prose of New York is mostly the history of her Danas and Ripleys and Greeleys. These were able and even scholarly men, but their work passed, usually with the day's paper for which it was done. A little more enduring is the work of those who had the larger leisure of the weekly or monthly magazine. But the very best of the New York magazines, though they have contributed much to science, art, and general culture, have never represented quite the same high literary standard as the *Atlantic Monthly*. And among their editors and contributors there was no Lowell or Holmes, but only a Holland, a Curtis, and a Warner. Even these three, it must be noted, like Dana, Ripley, Greeley, and Bryant himself, were natives of New England and did much of their best literary work there.

J. G. Holland, 1819-1881.

Josiah Gilbert Holland, after trying both teaching and medicine, set out upon a literary career at Springfield, Massachusetts, where he joined the staff of the Springfield *Republican*. He won his early fame there through his "Timothy Titcomb" *Letters to Young People* (collected in 1858)—wholesome social essays of the sermonizing type, very popular in their day, and always worth reading, though never quite demanding to be read. He followed up this popularity with an equally popular poem, *Bitter-Sweet* (1858). The poem contained some pleasant pictures of New England life—a Thanksgiving festival and the like—that anticipated the finer work of Whittier's *Snow-Bound*, but it won its vogue, like the later *Kathrina* (1867), chiefly by its sentimental and rather melodramatic story. Dr. Holland was the author, too, of some little lyrics of a wide currency—*Babyhood*, for instance, and *Gradatim* ("Heaven is not reached at a single bound"). In 1870 at New York he assisted in establishing *Scrib-*

ner's Monthly, now *The Century*, and he was the efficient editor of that magazine until his death. He had written a *Life of Lincoln* in 1865; and in the latter portion of his career he essayed virtually the only form of literary composition he had left untried and produced several novels. *Arthur Bonnicastle* (1873), *Sevenoaks* (1875), etc., are good, readable stories of Yankee life, but they bear too clearly the stamp of the professional man of letters and cannot be ranked with the similar novels of Mrs. Stowe or Dr. Holmes.

If Holland in some ways suggests Whittier and Holmes, George William Curtis suggests quite as readily Lowell. Curtis was not a poet, but he was a foremost representative of that class of industrious literary journalists who combine private study with public service and who have done so much to mould the character of our later national life. He was a native of Providence, Rhode Island, and was a student at Brook Farm at eighteen. A journey through Europe, Egypt, and the Holy Land, resulted in several highly colored volumes of travel—the *Nile Notes of a Howadji* (1851), etc. His life thereafter was spent in journalism at New York. He conducted for a long time the "Easy Chair" of *Harper's Magazine* and was editor of *Harper's Weekly* at the time of his death. He was interested in all wise reforms,—took part in the abolition movement, and later attained national fame for his resolute support of the cause of civil service reform. As a platform orator, he rose almost to the rank of Everett and Phillips, and he stands to us to-day more for his character as a man and an influential public citizen than as a writer. Yet his name is associated with some well-remembered books. The literary flavor is most apparent in his early work—the volumes of travel noted above, certain essays of social satire, like *The Potiphar Papers* (1853), and the little sketch of *Prue and I* (1856), which, with

G. W. Curtis, 1824-1892.

its delicate sentiment and slender romance, has charmed two generations of readers. His later works were more directly the result of his contact with public life and public men. His addresses include, besides those like *Party and Patronage* on civil service reform, eulogies on Bryant, Phillips, and Lowell.

C. D. Warner, 1829-1900.

Charles Dudley Warner remained more persistently in New England than Holland or Curtis, but his name was so long associated with the editorial department of *Harper's Monthly Magazine* that he seems to be legitimately of the New York group. Born at Plainfield, Massachusetts, he went to Chicago before the war, practicing law there for a time, and then settled down to an editorial career at Hartford, Connecticut. He did much "hack work" of the better kind. "The American Men of Letters Series," to which he contributed the biography of Irving, was prepared under his supervision, as was also a "Library of the World's Best Literature." He wrote several novels, and several books of travel not unlike Curtis's—*My Winter on the Nile* (1876), etc. But his most characteristic work is to be sought in his collections of essays, such as *My Summer in a Garden* (1870) and *Backlog Studies* (1872). These have abundant humor and that undefinable charm of personality by which, with very little in the way of substance besides a mild social philosophy, some writers succeed in winning the affections of a large audience. Clean, gentle, and whole-souled, are the words to apply to Warner; and it seems eminently fitting that we should close this review of later New York prose with one who was, in his modest way, not unlike him with whom our study of the earlier prose began—Washington Irving.

The affiliations of Curtis and Warner, as of Hale and Higginson, were distinctly enough with the old school to justify the classification of them that is here made, but it is to be

noted that the date of Warner brings us fairly into the contemporary period. And it would be easy in this place to make the transition to that group of writers, led by Stedman, Aldrich, and Howells, who have maintained the literary traditions of the East since the Civil War. But one considerable figure remains; and it is through Walt Whitman after all, perhaps, that the transition to our later literature in its broadest and most characteristic aspects can best be made.

WALT WHITMAN, 1819-1892

A Unique Character.

It has been customary to regard Walt Whitman, the startling innovator and scorner of traditions, as belonging to the younger school of American writers, and any departure from that custom is not likely to pass unchallenged. Without troubling ourselves about his relation to culture, which, whatever Mr. Burroughs* may contend, is not very obvious, we may yet feel that he is, in manifold ways, sufficiently representative of the American national spirit to give him a place in this chapter. It is true, the uniqueness of the man puts him apart from the other writers, and would so put him wherever he were placed. He seems to defy classification. The public has not yet made up its mind whether he was a poet or a prose writer, a philosopher or an ignoramus, a genius or a charlatan. But his position is becoming each day more clearly defined; and the undeniable conspicuousness, not to say eminence, of that position, together with the nature of his message, which after all was not new but was only a more emphatic declaration of what was already in the prose of Emerson and the verse of Whittier and Lowell, gives ample warrant for putting him with the men of that elder period. Besides, there is a chronological warrant in the date of his birth, which is the same as that of Lowell's;

* *Whitman: A Study.* By John Burroughs.

and though he was much later than Lowell in coming to assured fame, his work was well begun before the war.

The School of Life.

The details of Whitman's life are of peculiar importance for the understanding of the man and his work. He was born May 31, 1819, at West Hills, thirty miles from New York city, on "the fish-shaped" Long Island, which he loved to call by its Indian name of "Paumanok." His ancestors were English and Dutch yeomen, with a slight Quaker strain; three centuries of them, he tells us, concentrate on one sterile acre, the burial hill of the Whitmans. His grandfather had farmed his lands after the manner of Southern planters, with the assistance of a dozen slaves. His father was a carpenter and builder. His mother—"my dearest mother," "a perfect mother,"—was Louise Van Velsor, in her youth a healthy Dutch-American lass and a horseback rider only less daring than his paternal grandmother who had smoked a pipe and acted as overseer of the slaves. His formal schooling, which was elementary only, was obtained rather irregularly. Many days of his youth he spent in roaming over Long Island, lounging with the fishermen on the beach, talking to the salt-hay cutters in the meadows or the herdsmen in the hills, clam-digging in summer, hauling fat eels through the ice in winter. Later, when his father moved to Brooklyn, he often stole back to declaim Homer or Shakespeare to the sea-gulls and the surf. In Brooklyn he became a typesetter in a printing-office, reading between whiles the Arabian Nights and the Waverley Novels—later, too, Ossian, Æschylus, and Dante. He was particularly impressed with the busy tides of life surging between New York and Brooklyn, through the city streets and up and down the Sound. He had a passion for crowds, for haunting the ferries, the omnibuses, and the theatres. Thus he got to see most of the celebrated men and women of the time—

Jackson, Webster, Clay, Lafayette, Kossuth, Fanny Kemble, Halleck, Cooper, Bryant, Poe. For companions, apparently, he sought out the deck-hands and pilots on the boats, or the omnibus drivers, "Broadway Jack," "Balky Bill," "Pop Rice," and the rest, by whose side he would ride, listening to their yarns, or declaiming into the street-traffic some passage, it might be, from *Julius Caesar*.

Journalism and Literature.

In due time, after various experiences in carpentering and school-teaching, he became an editor. Then, in his thirtieth year, he set off with his brother on a long expedition through the middle states and down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, bringing up at New Orleans, where he remained for a time in newspaper work. Thence he worked his way back, up the Mississippi, by the Great Lakes and Canada, and down the Hudson, travelling in all eight thousand miles, much of it afoot. Up to this time his journalistic and literary work was of the ordinary type and had attracted no attention. He had begun to write at twelve years of age, and some of his pieces had appeared in Morris's *Mirror*. His chief editing was done for the Brooklyn *Eagle*. But after thirty he became conscious of a great desire growing within him, and to accomplish this desire he resolved to put aside, if need be, the ordinary pursuits of life and forego the ordinary rewards. So well as he could formulate it to himself, it was a desire to put on record in some literary form an entire personality, a man with all his characteristics, sensual and spiritual, with his bodily sensations and appetites, and his mental and moral struggles, hopes, and dreams. Moreover, that personality was to be portrayed in the midst of the tumultuous, free, expansive, democratic American life of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Long consideration convinced him that the only way in which he could do this successfully would be by portraying his own personality, which alone he

knew, and which, from its environment and experiences, might fairly be regarded as the personality of an American schooled in the world both of nature and of men, robust, energetic, free, alert, tolerant, kind.

In accordance with this design, which he seemed to regard as novel, he sought some new form of expression. He discarded both metre and rhyme, and, after much difficulty, all stock poetic phrases, preserving still a poetic semblance by writing in long, uneven lines marked with a rude rhythm. He abandoned the name Walter for Walt, and "stood" for his picture with his hat on one side of his head, beard rough, blouse open at the throat, one hand on his hip and one in his trousers pocket. Yet the picture, as it may be seen in his volume, is not defiant, is even winningly modest in facial expression, betokening a character of frankness and simplicity; and Whitman exemplified his democratic simplicity by setting up the type for the first edition of his poems (1855) with his own hands. *Leaves of Grass* he named the volume, perhaps in symbol of the lowly, teeming, equality-loving democracy which it was his purpose to sing.

"Leaves of Grass."

> "One's-Self I sing, a simple separate person,
> Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.
>
> "Of physiology from top to toe I sing,
> Not physiognomy alone nor brain alone is worthy for the Muse, I say the Form complete is worthier far,
> The Female equally with the Male I sing.
>
> "Of Life immense in passion, pulse, and power,
> Cheerful, for freest action form'd under the laws divine,
> The Modern Man I sing."

The audacity of the thing challenged attention, but it was not likely to win impartial criticism. The hedge-hog public played its spines, as usual, in the face of such unconvention-

ality, and the author became notorious if not yet famous. The book was condemned by general readers, and by many critics. And more than thirty years afterward, Whitman, within four years of death, could still complain that from a worldly point of view his book had been worse than a failure, that he had not gained the acceptance of his time, and that public criticism still showed "marked anger and contempt more than anything else." Abuse, however, is a better stimulus than neglect; there must have been something to create such a stir. Besides, Whitman had, from the first, some loyal defenders. Emerson did not reject him, nor Carlyle. There were successive editions and enlargements of his work, and in 1868 a volume of selections from his poems was edited by W. M. Rossetti in England, where the author was readily accepted by men like Swinburne, Dowden, and Symonds.

War Experiences and Later Life.

The remainder of Whitman's life contains an important episode. At the close of 1862 he learned that his brother George, an officer in the army, had been wounded. He went to Virginia and became an army nurse, and from then till after the close of the war served faithfully in that capacity in the camps and hospitals about Washington. It was a fit heroic accompaniment to his heroic song, and it is almost incredible that he should have been dismissed shortly afterward from the Interior Department because an "official" disapproved of his *Leaves of Grass*. A vindication by an admirer, published under the title of "The Good Gray Poet," gave him an enduring sobriquet; and he was soon appointed to another clerkship. His literary work was not intermitted; the war experiences furnished him with some of the noblest passages of his poems as they now stand—the *Drum-Taps* and the *Memories of President Lincoln;* and he published his prose *Democratic Vistas* in 1870. After a stroke of paralysis in 1873—the culmination of physical ills brought on by

WALT WHITMAN

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS

BAYARD TAYLOR

SIDNEY LANIER

his hospital service—he retired to Camden, New Jersey, where he lived thenceforth, partly upon the generosity of his friends. His home became the resort of many visitors, who were always welcomed. He lectured occasionally, and he took a jaunt westward to the Rocky Mountains in the fall of 1879, but, like Thoreau and Whittier, never went abroad. He added several slender supplementary volumes of both prose and poetry—*November Boughs*, 1888, and *Good Bye, My Fancy*, 1891. He designed and built his own tomb at Camden, where he died, March 26, 1892.

His Prose.

It is still too early to calculate the orbit of an eccentric luminary like Whitman. But one thing we are certain of, that he fills a large place in the hearts of many lovers of English poetry, and that he cannot be omitted from any final summary of American literature. To lose from our records such a virile, stimulating personality would be to suffer irremediable loss. Our estimation of the value of his work must grow with our closer acquaintance with it. It has been said that his prose is of little value, but though written, unfortunately, without any sense of style, it is of much value. The hospital scènes in his *Specimen Days* are among the strongest documents left by the Civil War. Whitman continually declared that the real war would never get into the books; but one aspect of it, with all its horror and pathos and heroism, has fairly gotten into his book. It is an aspect, too, that most needs to get into the books in the interest of universal peace. His *Democratic Vistas* and his *Backward Glance o'er Travell'd Roads* are supplementary to his poems and almost indispensable to a right understanding of them. From these we learn that his poems, often seemingly incoherent cries—a "barbaric yawp" he called them, and the critics found it a good catchword,—had a definite purpose and were constructed on a carefully conceived plan; that, as

stated above, they aimed to set forth the democracy of this new world and nation, with all its virtues and vices, its meanness and grandeur, and through it all, profiting by its very effacement of false distinctions, the sure evolution of the individual,—the realization of the divine personality, call it soul or what you will, that every man feels within him.

The Poetry and its Defects.

Of course his poems, or chants, are the basis of his reputation. In *Leaves of Grass* he left, as he quaintly expressed it, his *carte-de-visite* to posterity. Nothing is easier than to pick flaws in the book. In the eyes of some it is one great flaw, a standing offence to the æsthetic sense. It is uncouth. It deliberately violates the rules of art, and unless we admit that our rules are idle we must admit its defects. We are struck by the strange vocabulary, the hybrid and foreign words that start up everywhere—*imperturbe*, *aplomb*, *habitan*, *Americanos*,—though now and then a humorous intent saves the phrase, as when we read: "No dainty dolce affettuoso I." Even more striking is the peculiar, lawless rhythmic movement, not the easy rhythm of prose nor the regular metre of verse, but something between the two. It is true, we have been accustomed to the same thing in the lyric passages of the Old Testament and in Ossian. But the preference of the ear for the regular harmonies of verse is shown by the fondness with which readers cling to one of the two or three metrical and rhymed poems in the book,—*O Captain, My Captain*. Indeed, it is not likely that symmetry of form, which has marked great poems from before the days of the Iliad, will ever be generally abandoned. Whitman chose to abandon it because he fancied that a greater freedom of form accorded with his theme. That Whitman would not have succeeded better with conventional forms is extremely probable, but the conviction remains that the final poem even of Democracy, if such ever comes, will be a product of higher art than his.

A more serious defect of *Leaves of Grass* inheres in its substance and method. It is diffuse, prolix. This, too, Whitman would say, is in accordance with the subject. Democracy is all-inclusive. American life is a great welter and chaos, and all this must go into the poem. But even chaos might be suggested without enumerating its particulars. The cunning painter knows how to put vast crowds into his canvas without painting all the individuals. Whitman insists on the particulars and makes no attempt at concentration. He complained of Emerson's books being all good sugar and butter. For himself, he gives us plenty of coarse bread and even unmilled grain in the straw.

"Land of coal and iron! land of gold! land of cotton, sugar, rice!
Land of wheat, beef, pork! land of wool and hemp! land of the apple and the grape!"

"I hear bravuras of birds, bustle of growing wheat, gossip of flames, clack of sticks cooking my meals, . . .
The ring of alarm-bells, the cry of fire, the whirr of swift-streaking engines and hose-carts with premonitory tinkles and color'd lights."

There are many pages of this,—poetic and prose phrases jostling each other in hopeless confusion. Doubtless the impression made is that of ceaseless movement and endless diversity, of tumultuousness and multitudinousness. But it is made at a great cost of time and nerves to the reader and with little cost to the writer. Much of what we are obliged to read is but the raw material of poetry which the writer has flung down before us without taking the pains to exercise his art upon it.

Finally, the gravest charge against *Leaves of Grass* touches its frequent coarseness of theme and expression. Whitman would conceal nothing, and naturally, in his conscious revolt against a society that timidly conceals too much, he grew a

little defiant in his plain-spokenness. This is perhaps the most that can be charged—he was needlessly gross. There was nothing morbid or vicious about it. His conception of society and the plan of his poem were in part his defence; besides, he was so constituted that he could accept all levels and conditions of life on equal terms and feel no repulsion; nor could he understand why others should feel any. He could associate with the tramp, with the Indian, with the butcher boy in the shambles. He was "no sentimentalist, no stander above men and women." "I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contain'd." He is the Benjamin Franklin and Abraham Lincoln type still further materialized; and inasmuch as we have admired the type and even proclaimed it to the world as American, we should do ill to repudiate Whitman. At the same time we may well remind ourselves that we have another type, one of refinement and spirituality, to set over against it—our Longfellows, Whittiers, Hawthornes, and Emersons.

His Aims.

When we turn to praise of Whitman, our task seems equally easy. The charge of egotism (except in the technical, philosophical sense of the word) may be dismissed. We have seen how he came to put himself so conspicuously into his poems. It was not to parade himself as an exceptional being, but rather as an "average man"—to hold the mirror up to other men and declare his kinship with them. There is no self-conceit about that. Moreover, looking back upon his work in his old age, Whitman was disposed to regard it very modestly and to admit frankly some of its shortcomings. He admitted that in pictorial and dramatic talent and in verbal melody not only the great masters of poetry but many besides had transcended all that he had done or could do. In his youth he had accepted the challenge of science and democracy to idealize them; in his age he saw the magni-

tude of the attempt and wondered at his audacity. The whole thing was experimental, and the probabilities were that it was largely a failure. He had honestly tried to give this new America a new poem, worthy of its new ideals; granted that he had failed, it was something that he had gained a hearing and perhaps pointed the way for a future and more able bard. The projected song of the soul, to supplement his song of the body, he had not sung, or had sung only in hints and fragments. That greater task he was willing to leave for the future bard. Even what he had done was rough and inchoate. "I round and finish little, if anything." "The word I myself put primarily is the word Suggestiveness. . . Another impetus-word is Comradeship. . . Other word-signs would be Good Cheer, Content, and Hope."

His Accomplishment.

Because Whitman as an artist did not always distinguish between good and bad, pursuing a theory with the usual fatal results, is not sufficient reason for rejecting him. We do not reject Wordsworth. We can pass by the bad and dwell upon the good. Taking Whitman simply at his own final valuation, we get much. The joys of free fellowship, the love of comrades, none has sung more heartily or worthily. And his courage and optimism are as deep as Emerson's. To the very last, beneath life's setting sun, he warbled (it is his own word) "unmitigated adoration." No one rises from his pages despondent. They breathe of life and health and boundless spaces out of doors. They quicken the pulse and enlarge the vision. He may have lacked the art of suggestion, the art which draws a portrait at a stroke, but there is no denying his claim to a profound suggestiveness. He throws out hints and clews which the reader must follow for himself. His poems open upon vistas. Read *When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer*, or *As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life*, or *Tears*, or *With Husky-Haughty Lips, O Sea.* Perhaps

still better examples are to be found in his *Passage to India* or his *Whispers of Heavenly Death*, those later and lofty chants in which he was feeling his way toward the nobler, unwritten poem of man's immortal part.

There may be doubt whether Whitman has given us any adequate song of democracy. He stands for the American spirit, but not as does Franklin, Lincoln, or Lowell. If we think of all that these men did and then of what Whitman did, the difference is manifest. His office was somewhat like that of one who stands by and cheers while the procession goes on. It is true, he took a noble part through the Civil War—none nobler. But it was a humble part; he did not sit in the seats of the mighty. He saw democracy from below only, whereas Franklin and the others saw it from both below and above. Yet one positive accomplishment must be set to his credit. He became the truest laureate of the War, and of Lincoln, the idol of the people. His *Drum-Taps* give us the poetry of the great conflict, as his camp and hospital sketches give us the prose. *Beat! Beat! Drums!* and *Song of the Banner at Daybreak* are true poems in every sense of the word. The *Memories of President Lincoln* are as exalted as an elegy with such a great theme should be, yet as tender as the sincerest threnody born of personal grief. *When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd* and *O Captain! My Captain!* must endure with the fame of the "martyr-chief."

"O Captain! my Captain! our fearful trip is done,
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won,
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring;
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,
Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead."

Whitman's own opinion of the verbal melody of his poems (the regularity of the one just quoted is altogether exceptional) has already been cited. It must not be lightly assumed, however, that there is no music in his verse. We are inclined to complain when a poem like *The Vision of Sir Launfal* yields less melody than its form promises; on the other hand, we are delighted to find many of Whitman's poems yielding more melody than they promise. When his theme rises and his imagination and feeling rise with it, the words flow musically enough and the rhythm answers to the emotion. Listen to the bird song in *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*:—

> "Winds blow south, or winds blow north,
> Day come white, or night come black,
> Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
> Singing all time, minding no time,
> While we two keep together."

Not to feel the simple melody of this, or the larger harmony—the soothing, wave-like lapse—of other passages in the same poem, the ample sweep of the *Song of the Redwood Tree*, the majestic march of *Pioneers! O Pioneers*, the passionate pulse of *Beat! Beat! Drums!—Blow! Bugles! Blow!* would argue one dull of sense indeed.

But music and form are the last things Whitman would desire to have himself gauged by. He stands at the farthest remove from artist-poets like Poe, Longfellow, and Tennyson. He is more akin to Carlyle and Emerson—men of poetic insight careless about some of the minor poetic gifts. He did not write to please, but to arouse and uplift. "The true question to ask respecting a book, is, has it helped any human soul?" He explicitly declared that no one would get at his verses by viewing them as a literary performance or as aiming mainly toward art or æstheticism.

> "Camerado, this is no book,
> Who touches this touches a man."

As such, therefore, the book must go down to posterity, not a perfect song, rounded, complete, and detached, but a cry, whether clear and strong or husky and broken, vibrant still with the feeling of the man who uttered it.

Here it seems well to mark the conclusion of the first national period—the creative period—of our literature, though of course literature, like history itself, is continuous, and can have no real conclusion short of national extinction. From Brown and Irving to Lowell and Whitman the compass has travelled a pretty wide arc. At first timid in spirit, and bound more or less consciously to conventional, old-world forms, our literature gradually shook itself free and stood forth a native product, willing to be gauged by its inherent vitality and its unborrowed charms. It began to register faithfully, too, the various steps in our national progress—the merely material subjugation of the wilderness, the declaration of moral and intellectual independence that followed upon the declaration of political independence, the development of a worthy cis-Atlantic scholarship, the encouragement of science and the scientific spirit, and the final establishment of the great modern principle of human equality. The progress was one that looked always toward making "the bounds of freedom wider yet." And with Lincoln's emancipation proclamation on the political side, and, on the literary side, the vindication by Emerson, Whitman, and others of the inviolate rights of the individual, America's part in the foremost mission of the nineteenth century seems to have been accomplished and the way cleared for new effort.

PART III

LATER ACTIVITY

FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE PACIFIC

1860–1900

LATER ACTIVITY.

CONTINUOUS though our literature was and is, a very perceptible change came over the character of it in the seventh decade of the nineteenth century. The Civil War troubled and retarded the current. The elder writers held on faithfully, but, except in the cases of two or three—Lowell, rather younger than the rest, and Holmes, to whom was given a second youth,—there was naturally a falling off in the quality of their product, or they turned their attention to translation and other less original work. And the younger generation was slow to take their places.

Of two reasons that may be assigned for this phenomenon, one has just been mentioned. The civil conflict, so long averted, but coming finally with such terrible and prolonged results, absorbed the best energies and blood of the youth of the nation. Even the masses of the people who took no direct part in it were necessarily distracted by it, and the conditions of life were made harder. There was no leisure for art, and no demand for it—no surplus of wealth to support it. The latest birth-year of our great writers was that of Lowell and Whitman, 1819, or, to include Parkman, Curtis, and Taylor, that of Taylor, 1825. Manifestly, those born later had not time to get fully settled into the literary way of life before the great struggle came; and the prohibitive conditions which it brought remained operative for many years.

The other reason is scarcely a reason,—it is rather an observed fact. Literature, like other phenomena, seems to follow some law of rhythm. Great writers appear in groups, and a period of great achievement is followed by a period of lesser achievement or even barrenness. It was perhaps inevitable

that the end of the nineteenth century should show no such literary record as the middle. The drift of the age, too, away from idealistic philosophy, toward a materialistic science and toward industrialism and commercialism, has tended to check artistic creation and assist this rhythmic ebb. Possibly we are wrong in fancying that there is any antagonism between science and poetry—at bottom there probably is not; and possibly we fail to estimate rightly the artistic product of our times; but the fact remains that, in our present judgment, not a single poet arose in the closing decades of the century who could compare with the least of the seven who filled the preceding decades with song; nor was there any writer of imaginative prose to compare with Poe and Hawthorne, nor any orator like Webster, nor any sage like Emerson.

But the period has been far from barren. Criticism is ransacking all the records of the past; science is making new records; and journalism grows apace. Pens were never busier than now, and ephemeral as their product for the most part seems, the future will doubtless find in it something worthy to be preserved. Meanwhile, we observe that new notes have been sounded, both in verse and in prose, and though our judgment must be still cautious and apologetic, we feel assured that our literature is daily growing, if not deeper, yet broader and richer. We observe too, the wide geographical distribution of this later product. New England and the Middle Atlantic States no longer hold a monopoly. The South was gathering strength in letters even at the outbreak of the war; and since then, literature, after taking one great leap with the leap of settlement to the Pacific coast, has gradually spread over the country until now there is scarcely a considerable valley, plain, or mountain-side, south, west, north, or east, that has not its local writers and even its local tone. Indeed, among the new notes of our literature, this vogue of the provincial, this strong and

endlessly varied local color, is so marked that it might almost give its name to the period.

In grouping the writers of this period, therefore, a geographical division is desirable. Except, too, for the motley later fiction, often too narrowly local to be classified, such a division will be found both easy and logical, since the writers of each large section of the country, with all their minor differences, betray common characteristics and tendencies. No classification, however, can be perfect; and especially in such a diverse and restless population as ours, one must be prepared to find writers who constantly overstep the bounds of their section and class. Walt Whitman, for instance, who might well have been the spokesman of a less aristocratic community, was of the East; and naturally a few types of all sections may be seen meeting on the common new ground of the West. But on the whole these sections, as reflected in literature, have kept remarkably distinct.

CHAPTER VIII

POETRY IN THE SOUTH

Before 1860, no literary impulse manifesting itself in work of high order was felt farther south than Richmond. The name of Poe, which Richmond may claim, is of course national, and more. But the names of Wilde of Georgia and Simms of South Carolina are considerably less. Such other names as might be mentioned are, properly, almost wholly forgotten. About 1860, however, there were signs of an awakened activity, and though it was checked and thwarted by the disasters that speedily followed, it was never entirely repressed, and it finally resulted in a literature that no longer compared unfavorably with the contemporaneous literature of the North.

So far as the South is concerned, the period from 1860 to 1900 falls sharply into two parts. The first half, to be considered in this place, was marked by poetic activity, but apparently brought forth not a single important work of prose. During the second half the activity in prose fiction was marked, while the years were singularly barren of poetry. All of the literature is in some sense retrospective. At least it has kept rather closely to the traditions of an earlier time. The poetry has been but a second flowering of that exuberant lyricism which distinguished the earlier writers from Wilde to Poe, while the prose fiction, often poetic in coloring, has but half adopted the methods of the later realists, reverting as it does by choice to the old South, and keeping mostly on the side of chivalry and romance.

Paul Hamilton Hayne and **Henry Timrod**, the first in

time of the later poets, are properly remembered together. They were born at Charleston, South Carolina, with but three weeks difference in their ages. They sat together at school, and remained life-long friends. Both had the friendly encouragement of the novelist Simms. Both served in the Confederate army, Hayne as a colonel, Timrod as a private and a war correspondent. Both suffered wreck of health and home in the devastating conflict, and both wrung from its turmoil inspiration to song. Hayne, who was a member of an old and wealthy Carolina family—a nephew of the Senator Hayne made famous by the great debate with Webster—was the more fortunate of the two in worldly circumstances and length of life. The war, however, left him in poverty, and he retired in his later years to the pine barrens near Augusta, Georgia, pursuing his chosen profession of writing as a means of support. He had published a volume of poems as early as 1855, and he was long regarded as the representative poet of the South, though both Timrod and Lanier have since come to share his honors. With much of the artist in his temperament, he excelled in sonnets, and in quiet landscape poems picturing the warmth and softness of southern scenery. He wrote war lyrics and ballads—*Beyond the Potomac*, *Vicksburg*, *In Harbor*, etc.—but they breathe little more of the Tyrtæan spirit than do Longfellow's. They are distinctly inferior to the stirring war ballads of several otherwise minor poets—Forceythe Willson, for example, by residence of Kentucky, or Dr. Francis O. Ticknor of Georgia, whose poems Hayne edited, and who was the author of the striking *Little Giffen of Tennessee.*

Paul H. Hayne, *1830-1886.*
Henry Timrod, *1829-1867.*

Timrod, perhaps, of all these writers, felt most keenly the blow that so injured the rising literature of the South. He published a volume of poems in 1860, which was well received; but the war, beginning shortly afterward, interfered with any

continuous effort and left him in the end to carry on a losing fight against poverty and consumption. The death of a child added to the bitterness of his last desolate years. He died in 1867. His poems, numbering about eighty in all, were gathered and published in 1873, with a memoir by his friend Hayne, and there was a re-issue—a memorial edition—in 1899. Timrod was a more serious and spontaneous singer than Hayne, and somewhat less finished, though still of a fine artistic sense. *Katie* is an exquisite little idyl, with pictures like paintings on porcelain. Better known and more distinctly southern is *The Cotton Boll*, a poem veritably aglow with the dazzling sunshine that lies over the snowy cotton fields, and sounding, in its deeper passages, a note of prayerful patriotism half Miltonic in fervor. His poems written in war time, few, but strong, passionate, and sincere, mark him as the real laureate of the Confederacy. *Carolina* and *Ethnogenesis* ('the birth of a nation') are the utterances of a noble and fiery heart. Yet the word "peace" was always on his lips, and there is scarcely a poem that does not end with a peaceful vision or prayer,—which makes the tragedy of his life one of the inscrutable ironies of fate.

Sidney Lanier, 1842-1881.

Sidney Lanier, who began his work just about the time of Timrod's premature death, is the foremost singer that the South has given us since Poe; some critics, indeed, notably Mr. Stedman, have been disposed to put him almost on a level with our great poets. His life, also, was broken and brief. Born at Macon, Georgia, of Huguenot and Scotch ancestry, he was graduated from a Georgia college at the age of eighteen, and in the year following, on the outbreak of the war, enlisted in the Confederate army. He was in the battle of Seven Pines and in the Seven Days' Battle about Richmond, and spent five months in captivity in Point Lookout prison. Some of his war experiences went into

his first book, *Tiger Lilies*, a hastily written novel published in 1867. After the war, with little but a brave wife and a brave heart, he began his fifteen years' struggle with consumption. When his health permitted, he taught, or played the flute in an orchestra at Baltimore. So passionately fond of music was he that he could scarcely decide between that and poetry in his choice of a profession, though the needs of his life were such as to leave little to the preferences of his taste. He did some irregular literary work of whatever nature came to hand. Through the influence of Bayard Taylor, whose acquaintance he had made and who was one of the first to appreciate his powers, he was brought into public notice by being chosen to write the Cantata for the opening of the Centennial Exposition in 1876. In 1879 he was appointed a lecturer on English literature at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and his prospects for leisure and a competence were at last brightening. Two years later he died.

Lanier's prose includes, besides the youthful novel already mentioned, some working over of old chronicles and legends for juvenile readers—*The Boy's Froissart*, *The Boy's King Arthur*, etc.,—and two series of university lectures, *The Science of English Verse*, and *The English Novel*. The latter are valuable as stimulative pieces of criticism, but Lanier's prose would not alone make good his literary claims. These rest upon his poetry, of which a volume was published in 1876, and a complete volume posthumously. The bulk of it is not much greater than Timrod's, but it is in every way larger in conception and more finished in form. Lanier had definite and positive views of the relation of art to life—it might almost be said that to him art was life. He invested it with the sacredness of religion, and everywhere through his verse may be seen an exaltation of the creative gift and a protest against the commercialism and materialism, the greed and insincerity,

that seemed to him to be the curses of our modern civilization and to put poetry, music, and all the means of æsthetic and spiritual enjoyment beyond our reach. These views, however, are not didactically set forth. On the contrary, there is little American verse more refined and airily imaginative than Lanier's, and none, except Poe's, more melodious. His poems are gospels even more in their form than in their substance. *The Symphony* is not only a glorification of art; it is itself a glorified example of art, in which the violins and the flute and the clarionet are made to speak almost in their own tones, complaining of the deadly blight of Trade, and singing the praises of the music-master, unselfish Love. *Corn* is the hymn of the higher life of culture. The *Ballad of the Trees and the Master* and *The Marshes of Glynn* are religion set to music.

Lanier was a constant experimenter, and though he was permitted to accomplish little, he essayed much. *The Revenge of Hamish*, in which he went outside of America for a subject, as Timrod did in *Katie*, is a narrative poem in long swinging lines—a powerful, almost tear-compelling ballad. The *Psalm of the West* is an ambitious song of the New World and the American Republic, from the voyage of Columbus to the reunion of North and South. There are several good poems in the negro dialect; and there are some exquisite lyrics, of which perhaps the best are *The Song of the Chattahoochee* and *Evening Song*. But the incomplete *Hymns of the Marshes*, upon which he worked feverishly almost to the hour of his death, indubitably reveal the poet at his highest and best. The pictures of the live oaks with their "little green leaves," of the glimmering marsh, "a limpid labyrinth of dreams," of the rising sun and the flooding sea, are all drawn by the hand of a master. It must be admitted, too, that even after Poe and Tennyson and Swinburne he has wrested new melodies

from words. Yet we are often made to feel that in applying so cunningly his theories of "tone-color" and harmony he has been led too far from spontaneity and has substituted artificial conceits for the fresh imagery of inspiration. In his devotion to the two arts of music and verse, he has lost sight of the boundaries of each, and has tried to secure, with language, effects which should be attempted with music only. In spite, however, of partial and perhaps inevitable failure, we shall long remember him for his high ideals, for the religious and even heroic consecration of his life to art under most discouraging conditions, and for the undeniable beauty of much that he left behind.

CHAPTER IX

PROSE AND POETRY IN THE WEST

Literature in the West—between the Ohio River, let us say, and the Pacific Ocean—has not followed the same course of development as in the South. It scarcely made a beginning until well after the Civil War; perhaps no book published in this region before 1867 is worth recording to-day. Moreover, it is different in character. Prose and poetry have from the outset existed side by side, with a perceptible leaning toward prose as the more natural form of expression. The prose which we shall find supplanting the poetry of the South is still in a measure poetic; the poetry of the West often tends to employ the free and homely idioms of prose. The western literature in its entirety is a novel product, quite without traditions, as new as the surroundings and the society which it reflects. That which Walt Whitman expressly stood for—sheer democracy, the levelling of class distinctions and the uncompromising assertion of the individual—finds here a natural emphasis. College men are very decidedly in the minority. Farming, mining, lumbering, trapping, scouting, at the highest journalism and local law or politics, furnished the education of the western pioneer. Many a western "man of letters" has ploughed corn, "punched" cattle, sluiced gold, or travelled about the country with a pedler's cart. Men of culture from the East found their way to the West, but not in sufficient numbers to change materially the character of its early literature. Prestige was from the first disregarded, culture often held in scorn. It is manifest that a literature of this type

must be gauged by somewhat altered standards. Yet it seems not unlikely that it is precisely this which the future will select as the most vital and characteristic literary product of the close of the nineteenth century in the United States.

One of the veterans of this western school, who, though long famous, has but lately been conceded the dignified position that is his due, is Samuel Langhorne Clemens, universally known as "Mark Twain." He was born in Missouri in 1835.

S. L. Clemens, 1835-

Avoiding with considerable success even a common school education, he got his first literary training, like Franklin, Taylor, Whitman, and Howells, at the printer's case. For a while he was a tramp printer and for a while a pilot on the Mississippi. In 1861 he went to Nevada, where he became an editor of the Virginia City *Enterprise*. He engaged in mining, too; and pushing still farther west, pursued both mining and newspaper work in California. In 1866 he visited the Hawaiian Islands, and finding upon his return that his humorous sketches in the San Francisco newspapers had given him a local fame, he began lecturing. In 1867 he went east, published *The Jumping Frog and Other Sketches*, and then made the European tour which resulted in the book that won him a national fame, *Innocents Abroad* (1869). Since then he has pursued a steady literary career, and the names of his many books are so familiar as scarcely to require recording. He has also travelled and lectured extensively, especially of late years, successfully laboring, with a heroism that reminds one of Sir Walter Scott, to remove a debt incurred by the failure of a publishing house which he founded. His permanent home is now at Hartford, Connecticut.

Mr. Clemens's best works connect themselves directly with his early experiences in the West. *Roughing It* (1872), for example, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), and *Life on*

the Mississippi (1883), are chapters out of the very heart of that life to which he had lived as closely as a man may live. This is their first claim to excellence. Their second claim lies in the emphasis which they lay upon one of the most characteristic phases of that life, namely, its rough humor. Mark Twain, indeed, will always be known as a humorist. A single serious work, like his *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, cannot make against this estimate. He, more than any other one person, has given late American humor the distinctive name it enjoys. Unfortunately, this very quality, which insured his popularity, brought also for a time the severest criticism. The humor is a little coarse for the readers of an age that shrinks from Rabelais and Swift. It might have passed in the days of Irving; it was pretty sure to be challenged after the delicate wit of Lowell and Holmes. Moreover, it possesses some unpleasant American characteristics. *Innocents Abroad*, for example, has in it not a little of that irreverence which Americans often betray in the presence of sacred old world scenes and institutions. But there is always one thing in its favor. There is little torturing of the fancy, as in some of our minor humorists, to make every sentence yield a laugh. The humor is of the most genuine kind—spontaneous and irresistible. A man could not stand before the public so many years as Mark Twain has done, bearing the most difficult of reputations to sustain, if humor were not of his very essence. Besides, his humor has mostly a purpose beyond the flash of wit. Pure drollery carried Artemus Ward into a deserved reputation. But Twain goes beyond pure fooling. Even *Innocents Abroad*, by no means his best book, has served a good end by turning to ridicule the sham enthusiasm of the routine tourist and the innocence of the over-gullible. It is true, Twain likes to disclaim any such object. "Anybody who seeks a moral in this story," he said of *Huckleberry Finn*, "will be

shot." Nor are his stories ever very coherent, for constructiveness is not among his gifts. But in general they have a perceptible drift, and the fun that enters into them is there not wholly for its own sake but because it is an organic part of the conception: it often sinks to a subordinate element or even disappears in the presence of a higher purpose, and the writer becomes in turn a story-teller, a satirist, or a moralist.

Finally—and it is perhaps on this that Twain's claim to serious consideration is best founded—he is a genuine creator of character. A national literature can scarcely deserve the name until it has created characters which are seen to typify in the largest and best sense national traits. American literature has nothing to compare with the Greek Ulysses. Our national traits may be too many and diverse to be comprehended in one person, and we may have to be content with here and there a Long Tom Coffin, a Hosea Biglow, a Jack Hamlin, a Silas Lapham, a Colonel Carter. Even thus, our literature seems poor in real characters. But among the most satisfying are to be reckoned those two incarnations of "Young America" on the frontier, those heroes of the "Odyssey of the Mississippi,"—Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.

Francis Bret Harte, 1839-

The story of Francis Bret Harte is somewhat similar in its main features to that of Mark Twain. Born at Albany, New York, in 1839, Harte went early to California, where he became successively engaged in teaching, mining, and writing. His *Condensed Novels* (1867) were first published in *The Californian*, of which journal he was editor. In 1868 he became editor of the newly founded *Overland Monthly*, and in it were published his famous story, *The Luck of Roaring Camp*, and several years later his equally famous poem, *Plain Language from Truthful James* (otherwise known as *The Heathen Chinee*). Then, like Mark Twain, he followed his fame east, and after spending some years in the

consular service in Germany and Scotland, writing steadily in the meantime, he finally settled down at London where he still resides and still writes tales of the days of California before the Pacific Railway. *East and West Poems* (1871), *Tales of the Argonauts* (1875), *Gabriel Conroy* (1876), *Snow-Bound at Eagle's* (1886), and *Colonel Starbottle's Client* (1892), are a few of his more than forty published volumes.

Mr. Harte has commonly been classed with the poets, and the striking originality and occasional beauty of his poems give him a deserved place in that category. But it is doubtful whether any but the one poem mentioned above will live as long as will his prose idyls of that wild western life, all of which he knew and a part of which he was. It cannot be said that his late work has sustained his early reputation; that was scarcely to be expected, since the novelty has worn off and the writer's memory grown dimmed by time and distance. But his early reputation was well won. He was our real pioneer in the field of the short story—the story of strong realism reinforced by local color and piquant dialect; and the best writers in this kind at the present day, among them Mr. Kipling, are deeply indebted to him. Certain things can easily be charged against his work. Dickens thought it subtle in character delineation, but Dickens himself was scarcely subtle, and Harte's method was not unlike Dickens's in its tendency toward grotesqueness. Moreover, there is in Harte an apparent distortion of moral perspective, an exaggeration of the value of two or three virtues, such as courage, sympathy, and sincerity, to the complete ignoring of others. But the portrayal is essentially true to the life portrayed—the mixed society of adventurers, gamblers, desperadoes, and "rough but honest" men and women. One feels as he reads that it was thus that John Oakhurst and Jack Hamlin and Miggles lived and thought. Harte, like Twain, declared that he abstained from

any positive moral. He gave the bad with the good, though with the natural result that the good gains immensely by the juxtaposition. Indeed, one secret of his charm is the way in which his vivid pictures of vileness, dissoluteness, squalor, and misery are illuminated by deeds of the tenderest charity and the highest heroism. *The Outcasts of Poker Flat*, *How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar*, *Tennessee's Partner*, and a dozen more, bear testimony to this. The stories are related, too, with dramatic skill, and with full appreciation of their romantic and poetic setting. It is hard to review these scenes and characters of a bygone era, still so fresh and full of life, and not feel that Mr. Harte has done somewhat more than, as he modestly put it, merely gather the materials "for an Iliad yet to be sung." The Argonauts of forty-nine have had their bard.

Aside from Bret Harte, whose fame, as just stated, is more likely to rest upon his prose than upon his verse, Joaquin Miller, "the poet of the Sierras," stands out as the poet most characteristic of the far West. His parents named him Cincinnatus Hiner Miller, but he has preferred to rechristen himself with the name of a Mexican bandit, Joaquin Murietta, the subject of one of his poems. He has lived to the full the life of an adventurer and pioneer. He went from Indiana to Oregon when he was thirteen, worked in the California gold mines, and lived for a time with an Indian tribe. Later he studied law and became a judge in eastern Oregon. In 1870 he went to England, where he was warmly received as a new and picturesque poet out of the West. He published *Songs of the Sierras* in 1871, *Songs of the Sunlands* in 1873, and other volumes in subsequent years. *The Danites in the Sierras*, a novel, has been successfully dramatized. His later years have been spent near Oakland, California. But he remains young and adventuresome in spirit. In 1898 he went to the Klondike, not for gold, for which he

Joaquin Miller, 1841-

has always professed a fine contempt, but to be again with the vanguard of pioneers. The trouble in China in 1900 also found him at the scene of activity as a newspaper correspondent. But while Mr. Miller has maintained a certain prominence in the ranks of journalism, he has scarcely made good his early claim to serious consideration as a poet. Too many allowances must be made for his poetry. Lyrical before all else, it is exasperatingly careless—unsymmetrical and diffuse. It is overwrought in imagery, and makes use of all the Swinburnian devices of assonance and alliteration, without showing Swinburne's fine instinct for harmony. The most that can be said in praise of it is that it has glimpses of wild beauty with here and there a passage that is genuinely melodious, as in *Sunrise in Venice* and *The Rhyme of the Great River*, and that it breathes a spirit of rude chivalry, espousing with proud indiscrimination the cause of all the poor, the outcast, and the oppressed.

E. R. Sill, 1841-1887.

Two writers, who, though brought up in New England and showing the strongest affiliations with the eastern school, are yet commonly classed with the writers of the West because their most significant work was done there, are Edward Rowland Sill and Helen Fiske Jackson. Sill was a native of Connecticut and a graduate of Yale who went to California by sea in 1862, and remained there, with the exception of four years spent in journalism and teaching in New York and Ohio, until 1883. He held for some years the chair of English literature in the University of California. Four years after his second return to the East he died, at Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. Three slender collections of his poems have been published—one in 1868, one in the year of his death, and one in 1899. There is also a posthumous volume of prose, containing essays on nature, literature, psychology, etc. Sill is readily seen to have been a true singer, though of

the minor choir. He did nothing of large scope. His longest poem, *The Hermitage*, is rather a series of short poems. *The Venus of Milo* is about twice as long as *Thanatopsis*. The other poems do not commonly exceed half a dozen stanzas. Seldom, too, is the lyric quality striking. It is their compressed thought that gives the poems distinction. There is neither mediocrity of substance nor diffuseness of expression. Here and there is a note that is strongly Emersonian. The most characteristic thing, however, is a quality not Emersonian,—a haunting sense of the tragi-comedy of human life, a restlessness in the presence of its mysteries, and even a tendency to brood upon the major mystery of death. At one time, with a cheery recall to the primitive simplicities,

> "Life is a game the soul can play
> With fewer pieces than men say,"

but at another, "Life is a blindfold game." Thus one can not safely go to these poems for rest. But *Life*, *The Fool's Prayer*, *Opportunity*, *The Invisible*, *Two Views of It*, *Strange*, *Truth at Last*, and many more, show that Sill had some glimpses behind the curtain which he is willing to share with those who are prepared for either chance—to shudder or to smile.

Helen Fiske Jackson, 1831-1885.

Mrs. Helen Fiske Jackson, long known as Helen Hunt or "H. H.," at one time wife of Captain Hunt of the United States Army and later of Mr. Jackson, a banker of Colorado Springs, was born at Amherst, Massachusetts, and spent only the last ten years of her life in the West. The earlier part of her life, and especially the sorrows with which it was clouded, found expresssion in poetry. She published a volume of verse in 1870; and it seems not too much to say of such of her poems as *Spinning*, *Coronation*, or the sonnets *Morn* and *Thought*, that they evince a higher imagination than those of any other American woman poet except her fellow townswoman, Emily

Dickinson. But she lived to write a novel that set her name, with the multitude at least, in a higher place, and her fame will henceforth be most closely associated with that. After her removal to Colorado she became interested in the condition of the American Indians and their ill treatment by government agents, and in 1881 published a protest in their behalf (*A Century of Dishonor*), which led to her appointment as special examiner to the mission Indians of California. The final outcome was the composition and publication of her novel, *Ramona*, in 1884. *Ramona* scarcely needs description, any more than *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It was written in the same sincere philanthropic spirit, and although, like Mrs. Stowe's book, or Cooper's novels, it idealizes somewhat the objects of its defence, such idealization is surely pardonable. Artistically considered, it is one of the finest creations of our fiction—a romance so infused with tropic warmth and glow, and so permeated with human sympathy, that its pictures of Arcadian life in old California and the gentle figures of Ramona, Alessandro, and Father Salvierderra will not easily fade.

Eugene Field, 1850-1895.

The Middle West, in its entire expanse from the Ohio Valley to the Rocky Mountains, has been rather slower than the Pacific Slope to bring forth either poetry or prose, and it still has little of worth to its credit. If any of its literature, besides the works of Mark Twain already mentioned, has a chance for such "immortality" as literature may attain to, one thinks it must be some of the children's poems of Eugene Field. Field, who was born at St. Louis, was, during his too short life, a hard-working journalist in various cities of the west from Denver to Chicago. He did his latest and best work at Chicago. He had a scholarly mind, which revealed itself in his most trifling hack work; and he made some delightful free translations and paraphrases of Horace (*Echoes from the Sabine Farm*, with R. M. Field,

1893). A true bibliophile, he wrote much upon the love of books. But the love of children called forth his best work, and his poems thus inspired, easily comparable to Stevenson's in their mingled quaintness, humor, and pathos, are scarcely second to any in the language. *Little Boy Blue*, *Wynken, Blynken, and Nod*, and half a dozen others, though barely ten years old, have already become classics.

Other writers of the Middle and Far West come readily to mind. There is James Whitcomb Riley, of Indiana, another typical rover and journalist, well-known for his dialect poems of humble life, and the author of child verse almost as popular though never so entirely unaffected as Field's. There is Edwin Markham, of Oregon and California, lately sprung into fame with his over-praised poem, *The Man with the Hoe*, but before that the author of many a genuine lyric unfretted with sense of social wrong. And to go back almost to an earlier generation there are, or were, John Hay, the Piatts, Richard Realf, and more. But here it is safest to pause. The anthologies will winnow out such productions of these as have any permanent significance. The later novelists remain, and in them, possibly, the hope of the coming literature of this section now lies; but none of them as yet call for special treatment and the mention of whatever promise they reveal will be reserved for another place.

CHAPTER X

POETRY AND CRITICISM IN THE EAST

The later literature of the north and middle Atlantic states stands forth in no such clear outlines as that of either the South or the West. In this eastern region, of course, the succession was never entirely broken, and it is not easy to separate later writers from earlier, especially since the later largely uphold familiar traditions, standing for the inherited ideals of dignity, scholarship, refinement, taste, and finish. But a difference in quality may be detected, possibly because the later writers have suffered from the very fact of having clung to their inheritance. The old veins were worked out and new were not found. The earlier writers, too, many of whom lived on into an active old age, overshadowing their natural successors, were natively superior in all points of genius. In the field of poetry in particular, the very best of the later writers have been the readiest to recognize the easy pre-eminence of the elder group; so that, feeling no insistent voice within and finding no encouraging demand from without, they have produced sparingly and are even disposed, as the years go by, to reduce the bulk of their acknowledged product. Another restraining factor which must doubtless be taken into account, is the gradual encroachment of the virile and picturesque literature of the South and the West, which the East itself has been prone to treat lightly, but which has often penetrated more readily into the centres of European culture than anything the conservative East has produced.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich was one of the first to publish of the eastern succession, and has been most steadfast in his devotion to the profession of his early choice. He was born in New Hampshire, passed a part of his youth in Louisiana, and, foregoing a college education, at the age of seventeen entered journalism at New York, where he won the friendship of Willis and became associated with Taylor, Stoddard, and Stedman. There, before he was twenty, he wrote the pathetic *Ballad of Babie Bell*, and also published his first volume of verse, *The Bells* (1854). A few years later he removed to Boston and became an integral part of the literary life of New England. Lowell, the first editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, had welcomed his contributions to that magazine, and in 1881 Mr. Aldrich found himself in the editor's chair with Lowell as his contributor. He remained editor of the *Atlantic* for nine years, and his contributions to it number over a hundred. His poems have appeared in many successive volumes and editions.

T. B. Aldrich, 1836–

Though Aldrich works with comparative ease in a variety of forms, from the sonnet to dramatic blank verse, he is at his best in lyrics of sentiment and fancy and the polished trifles that go to make up "society verse." One critic has ventured to say that he recalls the English Herrick. He has some characteristics in common with Longfellow. But Longfellow's simplicity is often replaced in Aldrich by a greater subtlety of thought and overlaid with a more elaborate art. His romantic fancy, too, has more of the far East in it than Longfellow's. Like Stoddard, he fell under the influence of Taylor's travel-enriched fancy, and he affects strains that are "blent with odors from the Orient." His *Dressing the Bride* and *When the Sultan Goes to Ispahan* are replete with color and all sensuous appeals. He is better known, however, by such simpler lyrics as *Babie Bell*, *Before the Rain*, and *The Face Against the Pane*.

Nor is it to be forgotten that Aldrich immensely widened his audience by those prose tales with which, in middle life, he began to vary the product of his pen, and which are marked by the same daintiness and artistic charm as his poetry, supplemented with a rare quality of humor. *The Story of a Bad Boy* (1870), *Marjorie Daw* (1873), and *Two Bites at a Cherry* (1893) are all well known. The first, largely drawn from memories of Portsmouth, the city of his birth, has become a classic "juvenile"; it was a forerunner of various books in a similar vein, notably Warner's *Being a Boy* and Howells's *A Boy's Town*. The second, *Marjorie Daw*, ranks among the very best short stories written by American auth

Classification and comparison, in the case o
Emily Dickinson, avail nothing. She was m
that the chances of time and place do
Emily Dickinson, 1830-1886. her life and her poetry were equally
the ways of others. Her years were
seclusion at Amherst, Massachusetts, where her father was treasurer of Amherst College. Her scanty verses, a kind of soul's diary, written with no thought of publication, became known to a few friends, and after much persuasion she allowed two or three to be published during her life-time. A volume was published only after her death, in 1890. The poems baffle description. They seldom have titles, and sometimes no more words than poets three centuries ago put into their titles, for she pours her words as a chemist his tinctures, fearful of a drop too much. Two stanzas, of four lines each, imperfectly rhymed, and with about four words to the line, are her favorite form. A fourteen-line sonnet is spacious by the side of such poems. Yet few sonnets have ever compressed so much within their bounds. To read one is to be given a pause that will outlast the reading of many sonnets; for they come with revelation, like a flash of lightning that illuminates a landscape

GEORGE WASHINGTON CABLE

FRANCIS BRET HARTE

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS

SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS

by night and startles with glimpses into an unimagined world. They bear witness in every word to their high inspiration. But stamped though they be with the celestial signature, they are but fragments, and in the temple of art, which keeps its niches for the perfect statue, they must shine obscurely.

Mrs. Harriet Prescott Spofford, Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton, Mrs. Celia Leighton Thaxter, and yet others of the New England songsters might be named here, but none has written what is ineffaceable and it seems idle to swell the temporary record.

Turning to New York, we are met at once by a veteran of letters already several times named in this history—Edmund Clarence Stedman, the poet-critic, a friend of nearly all the literary men of New York both older and younger. He is slightly the senior of Aldrich, whom he knew before Aldrich went to Boston, and slightly the junior of the New York and Philadelphia group of poet-journalists—Taylor, Stoddard, Boker, etc.,—most of whom are now dead. He is a native of Hartford, Connecticut, and his brief college course of two years was taken at Yale. His newspaper life in New York began in 1855, and for several years during the Civil War he was war correspondent of the New York *World*, gaining experience which he subsequently turned to good account in his verse. His later life has been spent mainly on the Stock Exchange,—a career which has afforded him leisure for his seldom interrupted literary pursuits. His poems comprise *Poems Lyric and Idyllic* (1860), *Alice of Monmouth* (1863), *The Blameless Prince* (1869), *Hawthorne, and Other Poems* (1877), and later lyrics and idyls.

E. C. Stedman, 1833-

Stedman, like most of his associates, is to be classed with the poets of the artist type—the poets whose creative impulse is never so strong as to make them forget the requirements of technical perfection. But Stedman chooses his themes rather

nearer to the ordinary interests of life than, for instance, Aldrich: he likes narrative and dramatic as well as lyric themes. By virtue of *How Old Brown Took Harper's Ferry*, *Alice of Monmouth*, *Wanted—A Man*, and *Gettysburg*, he became one more of our laureates of the great war. Yet he is never a passionate singer. Even heroic deeds are likely to receive at his hands the highly artistic treatment which results in the idyl, and this, as his titles show, is one of his favorite forms of poetry. At times, his fancy has played with lighter occasional and bohemian verse. The city finds him a sympathetic bard, and a wandering organ-grinder called forth a unique poem of genuine inspiration—*Pan in Wall Street*.

Mr. Stedman's later energies have been given over to critical work, and he has published *Victorian Poets* (1875), *Poets of America* (1885), and *The Nature and Elements of Poetry* (1892), with their accompanying Anthologies. By these works, with their poetic sympathy and insight, sane judgment, luminous style, and kindly, sometimes over-kindly, temper, he has placed himself foremost among our literary critics since Lowell. His service, indeed, has been peculiarly great. He has done one thing that Lowell was not fitted to do. He has helped to put criticism on a fairly definite basis without removing it from the realm of personal taste and appreciation. Scholars are under obligations to him for the measure of order which he has introduced into the chaos of minor contemporary poetry, while many a young student owes him a debt for being set in the way to a love of the best that literature can afford.

Among writers of the Middle East whose work has been done outside of the cities, perhaps the most prominent is John Burroughs, who was born in the Catskill region of New York in 1837. Apart from a few years spent in teaching and as a Treasury clerk at Washington, Mr. Burroughs has remained devoted to the country life in

John Burroughs, 1837-

which he received his earliest training. His writings, largely the fruits of his studies of nature, whether of the habits of birds or of the habits of berries, which he loves to cultivate, inevitably remind us of those of Thoreau, of whom in his naturalist's ardor he is fully the equal. But he is quite without Thoreau's eccentricity of temper. As befits a writer of the later time, he carries with him more of the scientist's spirit, and he is never obtrusive with his moralizing. One gets from him undiluted sunshine and field-odor and bird-song. *Wake-Robin* (1871), *Winter Sunshine* (1875), *Birds and Poets* (1877), *Locusts and Wild Honey* (1879), *Fresh Fields* (1884), reveal in their titles not a little of their character. Mr. Burroughs is also a literary critic of fine perceptions and poetic sympathies, as his *Indoor Studies* (1889) shows. He was one of the earliest defenders of Walt Whitman, and has published several appreciative essays upon Whitman's work. *Light of Day* (1900) is a volume of religious discussions. To the general public, however, he remains the naturalist, and he has been a potent influence, after Thoreau, upon the large body of writers upon outdoor subjects who at present enjoy such popularity.

Here might follow the names of many who have made later New York, even more conspicuously than later Boston, a centre of literary activity. There are some, like Richard Watson Gilder, poet, and veteran editor of the *Century*, who have long since won their circle of admirers. There are others, like George Edward Woodberry of Columbia University, alternately poet and critic, or Hamilton Wright Mabie of *The Outlook*, critic and engaging essayist, who are yearly strengthening their claims to admiration. And there is, or rather was, one in particular, who drifted from the West into the eastern metropolis, whom it is difficult not to praise at length, half in confidence that the future will sustain the praise. But though Richard

Hovey (1864-1900) easily surpassed all the younger singers in the native gift of poetry, his work scarcely bears the stamp of the great poet; his grasp upon life was not secure enough and his exuberant fancy nearly always fell short of the true shaping imagination, dallying with mere prettiness or wandering into regions of obscurity and mysticism, so that it is doubtful whether any further exercise of his powers would have made him more than death has now left him, a minor singer. Poetry and criticism, it would seem, simply hold their own in the East, keeping still at the lower level where they were left by the death of Longfellow, Lowell, and Holmes. There, as elsewhere, fiction now affords the preferred outlet of creative activity.

CHAPTER XI

LATE MOVEMENTS IN FICTION

The change that came over American literature in the latter part of the nineteenth century is most perceptible in the method and spirit of its fiction. It must be evident to the most casual observer that fiction has developed out of all proportion to other literary forms, until now the novel furnishes the staple leisure-reading of nearly all classes. So rapid, however, has been this development, and so multiform are its products, which change form almost from day to day, that anything like a history of the movement is at this stage impossible. The most that can be done is to indicate a few of the major tendencies and to put on record a few of the more important names.

Foremost among the changes to be noted has been the rise of what is commonly known as realism. This has been professedly an attempt to draw nearer to the conditions of real life. Vagueness of scene, abnormal characters, mysterious and impossible happenings, have been abandoned in favor of familiar and even commonplace scenes and events. The interest of plot, with its elements of surprise and terror, has been subordinated to the interest attaching to the development of character in the midst of the actual problems of existence. In short, romanticism, or the unrestrained play of fancy, has given way to simple fidelity to truth, and we no longer call our works of fiction romances, but novels. In this matter America has been a close follower in the footsteps of

Great Britain. The change from Brown, Cooper, and Poe through Hawthorne, Mrs. Stowe, and Holmes, to Bret Harte, Howells, and James, may be likened (though the individual comparisons will not hold) to the change from Scott and Bulwer, through Charlotte Bronte and Dickens, to Thackeray, George Eliot, and Meredith.

Concomitant with this development of the novel of character, of social problems, and of realistic scenes, there has been a marked tendency to specialize or localize. Every profession and occupation, from the priest's to the ward politician's, from the banker's to the burglar's, has been thoroughly exploited by the industrious novelist. Every section of the country, too, from the lakes and pine forests of northern Maine to the deserts and orange orchards of southern California, has found, or seems destined to find, its local historian in the guise of a writer of fiction. This has gradually led to a more and more lavish use of "local color"—that is, technicalities of profession or trade, details of local scenery, and above all, provincial dialect, to secure which the novelist often goes deliberately into a course of training. Fiction almost ceases to be fiction in its photographic reproduction of unselected and unarranged facts. It is clear that this is a natural but extreme outgrowth of the realistic method. There is, of course, virtue in local color, and the greatest artist need not, perhaps henceforth may not, dispense with it. But it cannot alone carry a piece of fiction beyond the temporary popularity which waits on novelty. The great work of art must portray, under whatever local and temporary guises, universal and eternal verities.

Turning from the character of this late fiction to its form, we note, in addition to the novel of standard length, a very popular variety known as the short story. The main characteristics of the short story are the same as those of the

novel, except that, instead of a long series of incidents, but a single situation is presented, or at the most two or three, with the connecting incidents omitted. The form has doubtless grown out of the tendency toward compression which marks the continued development of an art, and is fostered by the spirit of an age that is restless even in its leisure. It has been further encouraged by the rise in America of the popular monthly magazine, which depends quite as much upon the sale of single numbers as upon annual subscriptions. It is not to be forgotten, however, that the short story had an early parallel in the romantic tale, which bore about the same relation to the fully developed romance as the short story bears to the novel; and the tale, as perfected by Poe and Hawthorne, is one of the signal achievements of American letters. It was therefore natural that the short story should attain in America a high development, and certainly it is to be regarded, in its form if not in its substance, as American (and French) rather than as British. Great Britain has now several masters of the kind in the persons of Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling, and a few writers of the Scotch school, but a good many years before their triumphs the form was being perfected in the far West of America by Bret Harte, to say nothing of such less frequent but successful eastern experimenters as Hale and Aldrich.

These things are already sufficiently matters of history, but beyond these it would be difficult to go. The minor tendencies in fiction of the present time, not a few of which are easily to be detected, lack as yet the steadiness of a distinct drift and they must await the future chronicler. It remains for us only to consider a few of the late novelists who have won national recognition. Nor can there be anything like a careful classification of these. Many, indeed, who might well be in the company, have already been considered. Holmes himself was a late novelist, but other considerations have relegated him to

another time and place. So with Hale, Higginson, Holland, and Warner. So with Aldrich, a later and real contemporary. So even with Clemens, Mrs. Jackson, and Bret Harte. Clemens came to fame as a humorist; Mrs. Jackson was a poet, and her one novel bears no direct relation to the other fiction of the time; and Bret Harte himself not only was half a poet, but he worked so early and has remained so aloof, that there can be little impropriety in having removed him from this group, though his great importance as a forerunner and a really genetic influence must always be kept in mind.

W. D. Howells, 1837-

The position of precedence here very properly falls to William Dean Howells, who, though born in Ohio, has been closely associated through a long literary career with the writers and magazines of the Atlantic cities, and who, by energy, industry, and sound craftsmanship, has won his way to a position of leadership there among the later novelists and miscellaneous writers similar to that occupied by Mr. Aldrich among poets and Mr. Stedman among critics. Mr. Howells, like Bayard Taylor, had always literary proclivities. His early training was received in a country printing-office, and before he made, at the age of twenty-two, his first pilgrimage to Boston and New York, he had become acquainted with Spanish, Italian, and German literature. He was already contributing to magazines, and he published in 1860, with John J. Piatt, *Poems of Two Friends.* During the Civil War he was abroad as United States consul at Venice, and the delightful *Venetian Life* and *Italian Journeys*, which were published as the immediate result of this formative period of his literary life, fixed his reputation. He was editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* from 1871 to 1881, when he was succeeded by Mr. Aldrich, and he has been connected in various capacities with *The Nation*, *Harper's Magazine*, *The Cosmopolitan*, and other journals. His literary product has been

large and varied. There have been several volumes of poems, not only early in his life, but one—*Stops of Various Quills*—as late as 1895. There are prose volumes of travel, biography, and criticism; light parlor comedies and farces, such as *The Parlor Car* and *The Mousetrap;* disguised studies in sociology, such as *A Traveller from Altruria* (1894); and volumes of reminiscence, more or less autobiographical, including *A Boy's Town* (1890), *My Literary Passions* (1895), and *Literary Friends and Acquaintance* (1900). Outweighing all these, however, in bulk and importance are his novels, beginning with *Their Wedding Journey* in 1871 and including among the best *A Foregone Conclusion* (1874), *The Lady of the Aroostook* (1879), *A Modern Instance* (1882), *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885), *The Minister's Charge* (1886), and *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1889).

Mr. Howells has long been conceded to be a leader, if not indeed the founder, of the late school of American fiction. It is the school of realism already described, and its great representatives in other countries have always been admired and defended by Mr. Howells—the French Flaubert, for instance, the Russian Turgenieff and Tolstoi, and the Norwegian Ibsen. The realist (or "veritist," or "naturalist," as he variously prefers to be called) seeks his material in what he can observe and is opposed to altering it very much by either selection or rejection. His art, in the words of Mr. Howells, must be "true to the motives, the influences, the principles that shape the life of actual men and women." Sometimes, particularly with the French school, it leads him to the portrayal of all that is coarse, criminal, and revolting in life, so that the word realism has been often improperly narrowed to this. Mr. Howells, however, with most American writers, has avoided the worst phases of life. Indeed, he would regard such realism as a kind of untruth, scarcely less false in its emphasis than

the romanticism which confined itself to the rose-colored existence and the impossible deeds of princes, knights, and ladies. He seeks to portray the average man and woman under average circumstances,—Silas Lapham, an enriched plebeian struggling for social recognition, Lemuel Barker, a country youth pushing his way to fortune in the city, Marcia Gaylord, an irresponsible young woman going through the disillusioning experience of a loveless marriage,—all with painstaking portrayal of the minutest incidents in the life of the characters, and an unshrinking exposition of their unlovely traits of mind and heart, as well as of their better thoughts and aspirations. It may, indeed, be doubted whether such situations and such a method can bring out real character and show what humanity is capable of, whether they can better fortify us for enduring the trials of our own existence, whether, in short, there is any profit for us in an art that reveals little but what we can all see around us. But these are questions which each reader will answer according to his temperament. Some need the incitement of a glorified vision—of life as it might be; some, over-imaginative, need the wholesome corrective of life as it is. As for Mr. Howells, though his novels may at times be found tedious in incident and unsatisfying in conclusion, all readers must grant to him a deep insight into character, a power of exceptionally accurate and vivid portraiture, both of people and of scenes, and a never failing humor and charm of style.

Henry James, 1843-

Henry James, whose name has long been coupled with that of Mr. Howells as a writer of the same school, was born at New York and educated partly in France and Switzerland. Since 1869 he has lived so constantly in England that his title to be regarded as an American author is rather slight. Besides various sketches and essays in travel, biography, and criticism, his numerous

novels include *The American* (1877), *The Europeans* (1878), *Daisy Miller: A Study* (1878; later also *Daisy Miller: A Comedy*), *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *The Bostonians* (1886), and *The Princess Casamassima* (1886). Mr. James, with his knowledge of American character and also of European life and society, has largely occupied himself with portraying Americans in a European environment, so that the name "international" is sometimes applied to his novels. But Americans, it must be said, have often resented his portrayals as inaccurate or at least as unfair to the truest types of American manhood and womanhood. Naturally, others cannot be expected to see Americans as they see themselves, and Mr. James almost belongs among the "others." In his realistic method he has gone a step beyond Mr. Howells, being utterly tireless in reporting trivial conversations and depicting the minutiæ of actions and manners. This kind of analysis, purposely subordinating dramatic effects and leaving the characters to be deduced as from a photograph, results, in the eyes of Mr. James's hostile critics, only in analysing the heart out of his characters; he seems too clever to be strong and human. His style, however, like that of Mr. Howells, is polished, witty, in a way brilliant. And though there are many readers who cannot like his novels, there are others who find in them the perfection of the novelist's art and have made of their admiration almost a cult.

Mary E. Wilkins, 1862-

Of the younger realists, who have so increasingly confined their attention to the provincial, or local, novel, Miss Mary E. Wilkins is perhaps the foremost representative. She is of New England, and though that section of the country would seem to hold small promise for a writer of her kind, she has found there, in the farms and villages that have been least touched by the spirit of modern progress, material which to most readers is sufficiently novel and which

she has succeeded in investing with not a little charm. The stories by which she established her reputation were collected under the titles of *A Humble Romance, and Other Stories* (1887) and *A New England Nun* (1891). Those who are well-read in fiction will perceive that Miss Wilkins's work does not differ radically from that of a dozen predecessors;—the kind, indeed, can be easily traced back through writers like Margaret Deland, Sarah Orne Jewett, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps Ward, and Thomas Wentworth Higginson, to Harriet Beecher Stowe. But, as intimated above, Miss Wilkins has brought into combination more of the methods of the later writers. Working best with the short story, she has not hesitated to apply to it all the arts of the more elaborate realists. She has the primary requisites of her school—intimate knowledge of her environment, powers of patient and acute observation, lively sympathy, and abundant humor. She presents unmistakably real people and scenes —farmers, pedlers, district school teachers, afternoon teas, quilting-bees, New England door-yards with cinnamon rose-bushes, cemeteries with evergreen fences and weeping-willows. But she does not content herself with description and with conversation in rustic dialect. She never forgets that it is her business to tell a story; and just when the reader begins to feel stifled by the narrowness and dreariness of this homely life—to grow weary of the eternal old ladies knitting or demure young women in old-fashioned muslin gowns—she heightens the tale with a touch of the dramatic or throws in a sudden glint of romance. Human hearts are shown beating in the humblest of bosoms, and heroism itself is allowed not to be incompatible with life's daily round. This is doubtless the highest triumph of realism, and there are few of Miss Wilkins's stories that do not leave one with a sense of "more than meets the eye."

Frank R. Stockton, of Philadelphia, has won a unique

place among the late writers of fiction by combining the methods of the romancer and the novelist to humorous ends. Mr. Stockton's early work was done as a journalist. For a time he was assistant editor of *St. Nicholas* and he wrote some popular juvenile stories. With *Rudder Grange*, in 1879, he obtained fame among older readers as a humorous writer of unusual gifts, and the short story of *The Lady or the Tiger*, published in 1884, gave him a place which he has securely held ever since. Mr. Stockton's romancing is of the wildest and most whimsical kind and has in it much of the mock-heroic.. The foundation of his humor is the incongruous. He delights in getting his characters, in themselves essentially modern and commonplace, into the most absurdly impossible situations, treating them all the time with an assumption of the utmost gravity. This fantastic humor of situation, for which there seems to be no adequate description but the word "Stocktonian," may be found in almost all of his novels and short stories— *The Late Mrs. Null*, *The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine*, *The Hundredth Man*, *Afloat and Ashore*, etc. His short stories are usually his best.

F. R. Stockton, 1834–

Though Mr. Stockton is quite without a rival in his peculiar field, mention should be made in passing of another writer of the Middle East—or properly of the South, for he is a native of Baltimore—Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith, whose humor, like Mark Twain's, is more integrally a part of the genuine characters which he portrays, and whose *Colonel Carter of Cartersville* stands a fair chance of becoming a classic.

As was pointed out in the chapter on southern poetry, there was in the South, after the middle of the century, a marked intermission in the production of prose fiction. Simms's romances stopped with the war, and there were only a few such scarcely significant writers as John Esten Cooke, Mary

Virginia Terhune, and Augusta J. Evans to carry on the work. Not until about 1880 did the new South give evidence of a new school of fiction. To be sure, a somewhat noteworthy contribution to the fiction of local scenes, character, and dialect, was made in the later sixties by Colonel R. M. Johnston, with his genial and humorous sketches of life among the Georgia "crackers," but even these were not published in a collective edition until the interest in prose had revived. Now, however, that the energies of southern writers have been turned once more toward fiction, the product is rapidly becoming both large in quantity and high in quality. In general character and method it allies itself readily enough with all the later fiction of the country; but the picturesque nature of the scenes portrayed, together, perhaps, with a more tropical imagination on the part of the writers, has served to throw about it much more of romantic glamour. Prominent among these writers are to be named Joel Chandler Harris, of Georgia, who, in his creation of Uncle Remus, has given the plantation negro a permanent place in fiction; Thomas Nelson Page, of Virginia, who has reflected through the negro character, and with a faithful record of the negro dialect of the peculiar Virginian variety, the aristocratic society of the Old Dominion; and Miss Mary N. Murfree ("Charles Egbert Craddock"), of Tennessee, a writer of the descriptive or landscape school, who has wrought into the tapestry of her work the endless panorama of the hours and the seasons in the Great Smoky Mountains of eastern Tennessee.

But the leading spirit of this later activity, especially in its more romantic aspects, is to be sought still farther south.

G. W. Cable, 1844-

For twenty years George Washington Cable has held, with Bret Harte and Howells, the position of one of America's most distinctive novelists. He was born in New Orleans in 1844. After a short service

in early manhood as a cavalryman in the Confederate army, he entered upon a struggling career in his native city, at one time as a clerk in a cotton factor's office and again as a reporter on the New Orleans *Picayune*. He chanced thus to obtain a close knowledge of the life and character of the Louisiana Creoles, both in the city and among the bayous of the lower Mississippi, and this knowledge he made the foundation of his earliest essays in literature. His sketches, which appeared first in *Scribner's Magazine* and which were collected in 1879 under the title of *Old Creole Days*, attracted much attention and were rapidly followed by more elaborate romances—*The Grandissimes* (1880); *Madame Delphine* (1881); *Dr. Sevier* (1884); *Bonaventure* (1888); etc. Of late years, Mr. Cable, who now lives in the North, has taken interest in several philanthropic projects, and he has done not a little, both through his novels and through readings and lectures, to bring the South and the North into closer sympathy. Of real service in this direction, for example, is his *John March, Southerner* (1894), a novel of the reconstruction period. But his best work is to be found in his early romantic, almost poetic, stories of that quaint, remote life of the southern Creoles, which seems so detached from all that we commonly think of as American. He had precisely the qualifications that were needed for such work—a strong imagination, quick sensibilities, an equal command of humor and of pathos, and a picturesque style; and he succeeded in enriching southern literature as no prose writer before him had done.

Another southern writer of this semi-romantic type—another projector, that is to say, of very real characters against a romantic background—is James Lane Allen. Mr. Allen, who has come into prominence within the last ten years, has made himself known as the novelist of Kentucky, and in so far he is a writer of the "local" school. As such, however, he depends more on the charms of

J. L. Allen, 1849-

nature and landscape than on dialect, breathing the freshness of spring into his *A Kentucky Cardinal* and *Aftermath*, or saturating his *A Summer in Arcady* with southern warmth and sunshine. But it would be a mistake to regard Mr. Allen as merely a local novelist. The characters which he portrays and the problems of life amidst which they are compelled to work out their destinies are not to be circumscribed by state boundary lines. His writings thus challenge comparison with the highest in fiction; and indeed *The Choir Invisible* (1897), in its slightness of plot, its searching analysis, and its intense realization of inner experiences, suggests Hawthorne. It is when confronted by work like this that we are led to the judgment that the strength of American literature at the present time lies in its fiction.

Since Mark Twain and Bret Harte left the Middle and the Far West, scarcely a novelist of importance has arisen in that territory. One, contemporary with these, Edward Eggleston, of Indiana, has been a popular historian of log cabin life—of the raw civilization that was found among the early settlers of the Mississippi valley; another, Constance Fenimore Woolson, exploited the region from the shores of Lake Superior to the Gulf; and not a few later writers—Mrs. Catherwood, Miss Foote, Miss French, Henry B. Fuller, Hamlin Garland, Chester Bailey Fernald—have presented one type or another of its motley population, from the French explorers of the Old Northwest to the "cliff-dwellers" of modern Chicago, and from the claim-holders of Dakota to the gamblers and "high-binders" of San Francisco's Chinatown. But while one of these writers has fancy, and another technique, and another strength, and another humor, it is too early to say that any of them have brought the right combination of powers to their task, and the scenes and characters which they have more or less faithfully portrayed still await the final delineator.

CONCLUSION

Our review of the later American writers has kept pretty carefully within the field of legitimate letters. Did we care to extend the survey to the borders of that field where knowledge counts for more than imagination, we should be met at once by an army of industrious authors, including some, indeed, who might well find a place in this record. Oratory would offer no names, for the pulpit, the halls of legislature, and the public platform alike, reveal no speaker of importance since Curtis. Journalism, however, history, and the various departments of science, are fields of intense activity. In historical writing a prodigious amount of work is being done, and of such a sound quality that it threatens to make obsolete most of the work of the past. The names are many—in the field of American history, Goldwin Smith, Charles Francis Adams, Henry Adams, Von Holst, Fiske, Eggleston, Winsor, Schouler, Rhodes, McMaster, Woodrow Wilson; in American history and literature, Moses Coit Tyler and Barrett Wendell; in ecclesiastical history, Henry C. Lea; in British naval history, Captain Mahan. Of these names (Goldwin Smith, as an English Canadian, scarcely comes within our purview), perhaps three stand out conspicuously—Henry Adams, Hermann von Holst, and John Fiske; though it is probable that only Mr. Fiske has touched on such subjects and employed such a method and style as to reach many readers whose interests lie outside of special historical lines. The methods of the later historians have not tended to make general literature of their work; and the same thing is true in all branches of scholarship. It is, indeed,

difficult to resist including here the names of many specialists, —such as Francis A. Walker and Richard T. Ely in social and political science, E. L. Godkin in government, William James and Josiah Royce in philosophy, Simon Newcomb and N. S. Shaler in science, Francis J. Child and H. H. Furness in English language and literature, Drs. Eliot, Thwing, and Butler in education. But our definition of literature, as something that, even while it instructs, entertains by its appeal to the imagination, must often exclude greater names in favor of lesser.

The conditions now obtaining in pure literature have already been somewhat specifically set forth. Much poetry is being written, and some of it is read. The hundreds of versifiers have all a mastery of technique, and nearly all enough of the poetic spirit to keep them safely above the prose level. But they lack the qualities of real genius. Perhaps the highest promise of American poetry just now is to be found in Canada, where men like Charles G. D. Roberts, William Wilfred Campbell, and Bliss Carman (some of them now drifted across the border) are putting the wild beauty and romantic color of their native north into such intensely lyrical verse that American literature will speedily have to reckon with them. But in general our late poetry commands nothing more than a passing admiration; it plays no such part in our spiritual life as the earlier poetry played and still plays.

As for literary drama, it is neither written nor read. Here and there a man like Bronson Howard, the author of *Saratoga* and *Shenandoah*, has cultivated play-writing with practical success, but America seems to be farther from producing anything like genuine literary drama than it was in the days of Thomas Godfrey. Of course, the novel is in some sense a substitute for the drama and precludes the need of it. What the novel has developed into, we have seen. The interest

in the local or special novel is by no means abating. New fields are being ransacked—the Bowery, the tenement house, the club, the college, the corporation. Gold-hunters in the Klondike are bringing back strange and thrilling stories, and we may soon look to hear from the Philippines and China. Another notable direction, too, fiction is now taking, in the revival of the romantic "historical novel." There promises to be no longer the dearth of tales of the colonial and revolutionary days that there once was, and some writers are even seeking far-away foreign and mediæval themes, often with little historical or antiquarian knowledge upon which to base their fancies. This is perhaps a natural outcome of the revived taste, largely fostered by Robert Louis Stevenson, for the story of incident and adventure. Whether it will lead to a full revolt against realism and bring in once more a domination of romance, remains to be seen; but certain it is that some of the writers just now riding on the highest wave of popularity are workers in the field of more or less legitimate historical fiction.

Lastly, there is the essay—critical, social, religious, discursive,—perhaps the highest literary outcome of journalism. The frequency with which volumes of collected essays make their appearance would seem to indicate a peculiarly flourishing condition of the type. Certainly the type is popular, and many essayists may be readily named—Mr. Stedman, Mr. Woodberry, Mr. Mabie, Mr. Robert Grant, Dr. van Dyke,—several of whom have already been discussed. But distinctive work in this kind is rare; scarcely one essayist in a century attains greatness, and scarcely two in a generation are read into the next. The work of a hundred present day essayists is likely to be summed up and surpassed by some great social philosopher of the future. Meanwhile, one aspect of the contemporaneous essay deserves attention. Since the day of

Emerson and Thoreau the charm of out-door life—the lure of nature, tame or wild—has never quite lost its hold upon us. To-day we have, for strong witness to this fact, the writings of John Burroughs, Maurice Thompson, Ernest Seton-Thompson, and a large body of less known votaries. And we are bound to feel that this wide and healthy outlook of our present literature upon nature and humanity alike, is in reassuring contrast to the narrow, sombre, and introspective character of so much of the literature of two hundred years ago.

A CLASSIFIED LIST OF LATE AND CONTEMPORARY WRITERS *

POETS

THE EAST

See text for STODDARD, STEDMAN, and ALDRICH.

RICHARD WATSON GILDER, b. Bordentown, N. J., 1844. Journalist and reformer. Associate editor and later editor-in-chief of *Scribner's Monthly*, now *The Century*. "The New Day," 1875; "Lyrics, and Other Poems," 1885; "Two Worlds," 1891; "The Great Remembrance," 1893; etc.

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY, b. Ireland, 1844; d. Hull, Mass., 1890. An Irish revolutionist, transported to Australia, whence he escaped to the United States, 1869. Edited the Boston *Pilot*. Published "Songs of the Southern Seas," 1873, and other poems and sketches.

LLOYD MIFFLIN, b. Columbia, Pa., 1846. Painter and poet. A studious cultivator of the sonnet. "The Hills," 1895; "At the Gates of Song," 1897; "The Slopes of Helicon," 1898; "Echoes of Greek Idyls," 1899; "The Fields of Dawn," 1900.

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY, b. Beverly, Mass., 1855. Professor of English Literature at Columbia University. "The North Shore Watch (a threnody, 1883), and Other Poems," 1890; "Wild Eden," 1899. Essays: "Studies in Letters and Life," 1890; "Heart of Man," 1899; "Makers of Literature," 1900.

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* The principle of classification adopted here is for the most part apparent. Poets and novelists are subdivided geographically, the miscellaneous writers are not. Further, the men are separated from the women. Lastly, in each small group the order is chronological, except that in the case of the novelists, because of the rapid changes in the character of fiction, the writers born before 1860, both men and women, are separated from those born since. A few slight departures from exact chronology, made to secure better classification, may be noted especially among the miscellaneous writers.

HENRY CUYLER BUNNER, b. Oswego, N. Y., 1855; d. N. J., 1896. Editor of *Puck*. Author of "Airs from Arcady and Elsewhere," 1884; "Rowen," 1892; also several volumes of fiction: "The Story of a New York House," 1887; "Zadoc Pine and Other Stories," 1891.

FRANK DEMPSTER SHERMAN, b. Peekskill, N. Y., 1860. Adjunct Professor of Architecture at Columbia University. "Madrigals and Catches," 1887; "Lyrics for a Lute," 1890; "Little-Folk Lyrics," 1892.

CLINTON SCOLLARD, b. Clinton, N. Y., 1860. Professor of English Literature at Hamilton College. "With Reed and Lyre," 1886; "Songs of Sunrise Lands," 1892; "The Hills of Song," 1895; etc.

GEORGE SANTAYANA, b. Madrid, Spain, 1863. Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Harvard. "Sonnets and Other Poems," 1894; "Lucifer, a Theological Tragedy," 1899; "Interpretations of Poetry and Religion" (essays), 1899.

RICHARD HOVEY, b. Normal, Ill., 1864; d. N. Y., 1900. Graduate of Dartmouth. Journalist, actor, dramatist, lecturer on English at New York, poet. "Seaward" (elegy upon the death of Thomas William Parsons), 1893; "Songs from Vagabondia" (with Bliss Carman), 1893; "Launcelot and Guenevere," a poem in dramas, 1891-98; "Along the Trail," 1898; "Taliesin: a Masque," 1899.

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON, b. Conn., 1835. Literary correspondent and editor. Author of various volumes of poems, stories, and essays, from "This, That, and the Other," 1854, to "At the Wind's Will," 1900.

CELIA THAXTER, b. N. H., 1836; d. Appledore Island, 1894. Artist-author of poems and sketches of the north-east coast and the Isles of Shoals, where her father was a lighthouse keeper. "Among the Isles of Shoals" (papers), 1873; "Poems," 1874; "Drift-Weed," 1878; "Poems for Children," 1883.

EMMA LAZARUS, 1849-1887. A Jewess of New York, who wrote in protest against the persecutions of her race. Author of "The Spagnoletto," a tragedy, 1876, and various poems and translations.

EDITH M. THOMAS, b. O., 1854. A writer of New York City. "Lyrics and Sonnets," 1887; "The Inverted Torch," 1890; and other volumes of verse and prose.

HELEN GRAY CONE, b. New York, 1859. Teacher. "Oberon and Puck," 1885; "The Ride to the Lady, and Other Poems," 1891.

LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEY, b. Boston, 1861. "Songs at the Start," 1884 and other poems and essays.

DORA READ GOODALE, b. Mass., 1866. Published, with her elder sister, Elaine Goodale, "Apple Blossoms," 1878, and several other volumes. Also, separately, "Heralds of Easter," 1887.

THE SOUTH

See text for HAYNE, TIMROD, and LANIER.

ABRAM JOSEPH RYAN, "Father Ryan," b. Va., 1839; d. Ky., 1886. A Catholic priest, chaplain in Confederate army, and editor of religious periodicals. "The Conquered Banner, and Other Poems," 1880.

JOHN BANNISTER TABB, b. Va., 1845. A Catholic priest, and Professor of English Literature at St. Charles College, Md. Served in Civil War. "Poems," 1894; "Lyrics," 1897; Child Verse," 1900.

SAMUEL MINTURN PECK, b. Tuscaloosa, Ala., 1854. "Cap and Bells," 1886; "Rhymes and Roses," 1895; etc.

FRANK LEBBY STANTON, b. Charleston, S. C., 1857. On the staff of the Atlanta *Constitution*. Author of popular verse, often in dialect. "Songs of the Soil," 1894; "Comes One with a Song," 1899.

LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE, Baltimore, Md. "A Branch of May," 1887; "A Handful of Lavender," 1891; "A Quiet Road," 1896.

THE WEST

See text for HARTE, MILLER, SILL, and FIELD.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN TAYLOR, b. Lowville, N. Y., 1819; d. Cleveland, O., 1887. War Correspondent for Chicago *Journal*; writer of poems and travel sketches. "Pictures of Life in Camp and Field," 1871; "Songs of Yesterday," (including "Isle of the Long Ago"), 1877; etc.

RICHARD REALF, b. Sussex, England, 1834; d. Oakland, Cal., 1878. Steward of Lady Byron; emigrant to Kansas, 1854; follower of John Brown; soldier in Union army. Scattering poems, "The Children," "Indirection," etc., were collected posthumously, 1899.

JOHN JAMES PIATT, b. Ind., 1835. Served in several official capacities at Washington, and as U. S. consul at Cork, Ireland. Published

at Columbus, Ohio, with W. D. Howells, "Poems of Two Friends," 1860; also several volumes with his wife, and a number independently—"Western Windows, and Other Poems," 1869; "Idyls and Lyrics of the Ohio Valley," 1884; etc. "The Mower in Ohio" is a touching idyl worthy of Whittier.

JOHN HAY, b. Salem, Ind., 1838. Early years spent in Illinois. A private secretary of Lincoln; major and brevet colonel in the Civil War; editor and diplomat; Ambassador to Great Britain, 1897; Secretary of State, 1898. "Pike County Ballads," 1871; "Poems," 1890; "Life of Abraham Lincoln" (with J. G. Nicolay), 1887. Mr. Hay is best known by his poems in homely western dialect, written in his earlier years, particularly "Little Breeches," and "Jim Bludso."

WILL CARLETON, b. Mich., 1845. Journalist and lecturer. His poems are largely in dialect. "Poems," 1871; "Farm Ballads," 1873; "Farm Legends," 1875; "City Ballads," 1885; etc.

CHARLES WARREN STODDARD, b. Rochester, N. Y., 1843. Resident for a time in the Hawaiian Islands. Foreign correspondent of the San Francisco *Chronicle*. Lecturer on English Literature at Notre Dame College, Ind., and at the Catholic University, Washington, D. C. "Poems," 1867; "South Sea Idyls" (romantic prose), 1873.

WILLIAM RUFUS PERKINS, 1847-1895. Professor at Cornell and at the State University of Iowa. "Eleusis and Lesser Poems," 1892; "Eleusis," privately printed in 1890, is a long poem, dealing with the mystery of life, in the stanza and in the lofty key of "In Memoriam."

JOHN VANCE CHENEY, b. Groveland, N. Y., 1848. Librarian at San Francisco and Chicago. "Thistle-Drift, 1887; "Wood-Blooms," 1888; "Out of the Silence," 1897; etc.

EDWIN MARKHAM, b. Oregon City, Ore., 1852. Teacher in the California schools; resident of Brooklyn since 1899. "The Man with the Hoe (1899) and Other Poems," 1900; "Lincoln, and Other Poems," 1900.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY, b. Greenfield, Ind., 1853. Strolling vender, sign-painter, actor, journalist. Writer of poetry and prose. "The Old Swimmin'-Hole, and 'Leven More Poems," 1883; "Pipes o' Pan at Zekesbury," 1889; "Rhymes of Childhood Days," 1890; "Armazindy," 1894; "Home Folks," 1900; etc.

WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY, b. Spencer, Ind., 1869. Instructor in English at the University of Chicago. "The Masque of Judgment," 1900; "Poems," 1901.

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR, b. Dayton, O., 1872. Of African blood. Journalist and Librarian. "Lyrics of Lowly Life," 1896; "Lyrics of the Hearthside," 1899; "Folk from Dixie" (prose), 1897.

SARAH MORGAN PIATT (Sallie Bryan), b. Lexington, Ky., 1836. Wife of J. J. Piatt. "A Voyage to the Fortunate Isles," 1874; "An Irish Garland," 1884; "Child-World Ballads," 1887; etc.

INA DONNA COOLBRITH, b. near Springfield, Ill. Resident of Los Angeles and of San Francisco, and Librarian at Oakland, Cal. "A Perfect Day, and Other Poems," 1881; "Songs of the Golden Gate," 1895.

EMMA FRANCES DAWSON, San Francisco. Music teacher. Her patriotic chant royal, "Old Glory," was published as a prize poem in John Boyle O'Reilly's Boston *Pilot*. Her "Ballade of the Sea of Sleep" and a few other poems are included in a volume of weird tales, "The Itinerant House," 1896.

ELLA WHEELER WILCOX, b. Wisconsin. "Drops of Water," 1872; "Poems of Passion," 1883; "Poems of Pleasure," 1888; etc.

CANADA

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS, b. New Brunswick, 1860. Journalist at Toronto and New York; Professor of Literature at King's College, Windsor, N. S. "Orion and Other Poems," 1880; "In Divers Tones," 1887; "The Heart of the Ancient Wood" (a novel), 1900.

ARCHIBALD LAMPMAN, 1861-1899. Educated at Toronto; held a position in the Civil Service at Ottawa. "Among the Millet and Other Poems," 1888.

BLISS CARMAN, b. New Brunswick, 1861. Journalist, now resident of New York. "Low Tide on Grand Pré," 1893; "Songs from Vagabondia" (with Richard Hovey), 1894, 1896.

WILLIAM WILFRED CAMPBELL, b. Western Ontario, 1861. In the government service at Ottawa. "Lake Lyrics," 1889; "Mordred, a Tragedy" and "Hildebrand" (dramas in blank verse), 1895; "Beyond the Hills of Dream," 1900.

DUNCAN CAMPBELL SCOTT, b. Ottawa, 1862. In the Civil Service. "The Magic House," 1893.

NOVELISTS

THE EAST

See text for HOWELLS, JAMES, ALDRICH, and MISS WILKINS.

THEODORE WINTHROP, b. New Haven, Conn., 1828; killed at Big Bethel, Va., 1861. Traveller, and author of analytical tales. "Cecil Dreeme," 1861; "John Brent," "Edwin Brothertoft," "The Canoe and the Saddle," "Life in the Open Air," 1862.

FITZ-JAMES O'BRIEN, b. Ireland, 1828; went to New York, 1852; d. Md., 1862, from wounds received in the Civil War. Author of "The Diamond Lens" (in *Atlantic Monthly*, 1858) and other tales and poems.

SILAS WEIR MITCHELL, b. Phila., 1829. Physiologist and physician. "Hugh Wynne, Free Quaker," 1897; "The Adventures of François," 1898; "Dr. North and His Friends," 1900; also poems and essays.

EDWARD PAYSON ROE, 1838-1888. A Presbyterian clergyman of New York State. Author of a score of religious novels: "Barriers Burned Away," 1872; "From Jest to Earnest," 1875; "A Face Illumined," 1878; etc.

JOHN HABBERTON, b. Brooklyn, 1842. Editor. Author of "Helen's Babies," 1876, and many other novels; also of the drama, "Deacon Crankett."

JULIAN HAWTHORNE, b. Boston, 1846. Son of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Journalist and foreign correspondent. Author of romantic tales. "Bressant," 1873; "Archibald Malmaison," 1879; "Sinfire," 1887; also long novels: "Garth," 1877; "Sebastian Strome," 1880; etc.

EDGAR FAWCETT, b. New York, 1847. Author of "The House at High Bridge," "Douglas Duane" (1887), and many other stories, mostly of New York life; also poems, plays, and essays.

ARTHUR SHERBURNE HARDY, b. Boston, 1847. Graduate of West Point; Professor of Mathematics at Dartmouth College; in the U. S. diplomatic service. "But Yet a Woman," 1883; "The Wind of Destiny," 1886; "Passe Rose," 1889.

HJALMAR HJORTH BOYESEN, b. Norway, 1848; d. New York, 1895. Editor, and Professor of Germanic Languages at Cornell and Columbia.

"Gunnar, a Norse Romance," 1874; "Ilka on the Hill-Top, and Other Stories," 1881; poems, essays, stories for boys, etc.

THOMAS A. JANVIER, b. Philadelphia, 1849. Editor; traveller through Mexico and the south-west; later, resident in France and England. "Colour Studies," "Stories of Old New Spain," etc. "The Aztec Treasure House" and "In the Sargasso Sea" (1898) are stories of adventure for boys.

EDWARD BELLAMY, b. Mass., 1850; d. 1898. Journalist and economist. "Looking Backward," 1888; "Equality," 1897; "The Duke of Stockbridge," 1900; and several earlier works.

BRANDER MATTHEWS, b. New Orleans, 1852. Professor of Literature at Columbia. "His Father's Son," 1895; "A Confident To-morrow," 1899; and many sketches of New York life, essays in dramatic and literary criticism, etc.

FRANCIS MARION CRAWFORD, b. Italy, 1854. Traveller, and author of nearly two score novels. "Mr. Isaacs," 1882; "A Roman Singer," 1884; "Saracinesca," 1887; etc. Also historical works: "Ave Roma Immortalis," 1898; "The Rulers of the South," 1900.

HAROLD FREDERIC, b. N. Y., 1856; d. England, 1898. Journalist of New York State, and correspondent abroad. Novels chiefly of American rural life. "Seth's Brother's Wife," 1887; "In the Valley," 1889; "The Lawton Girl," 1890; "The Copperhead," 1894; "The Damnation of Theron Ware," 1896; "March Hares," 1896; "Gloria Mundi," 1898; "The Market-Place," 1899.

ADELINE D. T. WHITNEY, b. Boston, 1824. Author of novels and children's stories. "Faith Gartney's Girlhood," 1863; "We Girls," 1870; etc.

ROSE TERRY COOKE, 1827-1892. Novels and stories of New England life, and poems. "Somebody's Neighbors," 1881; "Steadfast," 1889; etc.

JANE G. AUSTIN, 1831-1894; of Massachusetts. Stories of early colonial days. "Outpost," 1866; "Cipher," 1869; "Standish of Standish"; "Betty Alden"; "A Nameless Nobleman," 1881; etc.

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT, 1832-1888. Daughter of Amos Bronson Alcott. Writer of stories for children. "Little Women," 1868, 69; "An Old-

Fashioned Girl," 1870; "Little Men," 1871; "Eight Cousins," 1875; "Jo's Boys," 1886; etc.

HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD, b. Me., 1835. Romantic tales and poems. "Sir Rohan's Ghost," 1859; "The Amber Gods, and Other Stories," 1863; "Azarian," 1864; "New England Legends," 1871.

ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS WARD, b. Mass., 1844. "The Gates Ajar," 1868; "The Story of Avis," 1877; "Beyond the Gates," 1883; "The Madonna of the Tubs," 1886; "The Gates Between," 1887; "Jack the Fisherman," 1887; "A Singular Life," 1895; "Within the Gates," 1900; and many other moral and religious novels.

BLANCHE WILLIS HOWARD, b. Me., 1847; m. Dr. von Teuffel of Stuttgart, Wurtemberg, 1890; d. Munich, 1898. "One Summer," 1875; "Guenn," a Breton romance, 1882; "Aulnay Tower," 1886; etc.

SARAH ORNE JEWETT, b. Berwick, Me., 1849. Stories of the northeast coast. "Deephaven," 1877; "A Country Doctor," 1884; "A Marsh Island," 1885; "The Country of the Pointed Firs," 1896; etc.

MARGARET DELAND, b. Pa., 1857. Resident of Boston. "John Ward, Preacher," 1888; "Philip and His Wife," 1894.

RICHARD HARDING DAVIS, b. Philadelphia, 1864. Journalist and foreign correspondent. Writer of short stories. "Gallegher, and Other Stories," 1891; "Van Bibber and Others," 1892; "The Princess Aline," 1895; "Soldiers of Fortune," 1897; "The King's Jackal," 1898; "With Both Armies in South Africa," 1900; etc.

PAUL LEICESTER FORD, b. Brooklyn, 1865. Traveller, and writer in the field of history and historical fiction. "The Honorable Peter Stirling," 1894; "The Story of an Untold Love," 1897; "Janice Meredith," 1899.

STEPHEN CRANE, b. N. J., 1871; d. Germany, 1900. Journalist. "The Red Badge of Courage," 1896; "The Third Violet," 1899; "Wounds in the Rain," 1900; also "War Is Kind" (verse), 1899.

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN (Mrs. Riggs), b. Philadelphia. Interested in Kindergarten work. "The Bird's Christmas Carol," 1888; "Timothy's Quest," 1890; "Penelope's English Experiences," 1893; "Penelope's Progress," 1897; etc.

EDITH WHARTON, b. New York. Several volumes of short stories. "The Greater Inclination," 1899; "The Touchstone," 1900.

THE SOUTH

See text for CABLE and ALLEN.

RICHARD MALCOLM JOHNSTON, 1822-1898. Lawyer; teacher in Georgia and Maryland. "Dukesborough Tales" (originally contributed to the *Southern Magazine*), 1883; "Old Mark Langston," 1884; "Two Gray Tourists," 1885; etc.

JOHN ESTEN COOKE, 1830-1886; of Virginia. Lawyer, soldier, poet, and romance writer. "The Virginia Comedians," 1854; "Fairfax," 1868; etc.

ALBION W. TOURGÉE, b. O., 1838. Officer in the Union army, jurist, editor, lecturer, U. S. consul. Lived in North Carolina, 1865-1881. Legal works and semi-political novels relating to the South. "Figs and Thistles," 1879; "A Fool's Errand," 1879; "Bricks Without Straw," 1880; "An Appeal to Cæsar," 1884.

FRANCIS HOPKINSON SMITH, b. Baltimore, 1838. Mechanical engineer; landscape painter; illustrator. Stories, essays, and character sketches. "Colonel Carter of Cartersville," 1891; "A Gentleman Vagabond and Others," 1895; "Tom Grogan," 1896; "Caleb West, Master Diver," 1898.

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS, b. Ga., 1848. Editor of Atlanta *Constitution*. "Uncle Remus, His Songs and Sayings," 1880; "Daddy Jake the Runaway"; "Mr. Rabbit at Home"; "Tales of the Home Folks"; etc.

THOMAS NELSON PAGE, b. Va., 1853. Lawyer and lecturer. "In Ole Virginia" (short stories—"Marse Chan," "Meh Lady," etc.), 1887; "Red Rock" (a novel of the reconstruction period), 1899; etc.

FRANCES HODGSON BURNETT, b. England, 1849. Removed to Tennessee, 1865; now resident of Washington, D. C. "That Lass o' Lowrie's" (Lancashire), 1876; "Louisiana," 1880; "Through One Administration," 1882; "Little Lord Fauntleroy," 1886.

MARY NOAILLES MURFREE ("Charles Egbert Craddock"), b. Tenn., 1850. "In the Tennessee Mountains" (eight sketches), 1884; "The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains," 1885; "The Despot of Broomsedge Cove," 1888; etc.

RUTH MCENERY STUART, b. La. Writer of short stories. "A Golden Wedding," 1893; "Carlotta's Intended," 1894; "The Story of

Babette, a Little Creole Girl," 1894; "Sonny" (the story of an Arkansas boy), 1896; etc.

GRACE KING, b. La., 1859. Stories of Creole life. "Monsieur Motte," 1888; "Tales of Time and Place," 1892; "Balcony Stories," 1893; etc.

AMÉLIE RIVES (Princess Troubetskoy), b. Richmond, Va., 1863. "A Brother to Dragons, and Other Old-Time Tales," 1888; "The Quick or the Dead," 1888; "Virginia of Virginia"; "Barbara Dering"; etc.

MARY JOHNSTON, b. Va., 1870. Tales of Colonial Virginia. "Prisoners of Hope," 1898; "To Have and to Hold," 1899; "Audrey," 1901.

WINSTON CHURCHILL, b. St. Louis, 1871. Graduate of U. S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md. "The Celebrity," a society sketch, 1898; "Richard Carvel," a story of Maryland before the Revolution, 1899; "The Crisis," 1901.

THE WEST

See text for HARTE and MRS. JACKSON.

LEWIS WALLACE, b. Ind., 1827. Lawyer; lieutenant in Mexican War; major-general in Civil War; governor of New Mexico; U. S. minister to Turkey. "The Fair God," an Aztec story, 1873; "Ben Hur, a Tale of the Christ," 1880; "The Prince of India," 1893.

EDWARD EGGLESTON, b. Ind., 1837. Methodist minister ("circuit-rider") in Indiana and Minnesota; editor at Chicago and New York; pastor at Brooklyn. "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," 1871; "The Circuit Rider," 1874; "The Faith Doctor," 1891; etc. Also several school histories.

AMBROSE BIERCE, b. Ohio, 1842. Brevetted major in the Civil War. Journalist, resident in California. "Tales of Soldiers and Civilians" (later title, "In the Midst of Life"), 1892; "Black Beetles in Amber" (satires in verse), 1892.

CAPTAIN CHARLES KING, b. Albany, N. Y., 1844. Served with the army in the west; brigadier-general in the war against Spain; served in the Philippines. Numerous military novels. "The Deserter," 1887; "Dunraven Ranch," 1888; "The Colonel's Daughter," etc.

CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON, b. N. H., 1840; d. Italy, 1894. Lived at Cleveland, O. Spent the summers of her girlhood on the island of Mackinac and the shores of Lake Superior. Lived also in Florida. "Castle Nowhere" (sketches of the Lake region), 1875; "Rodman the Keeper" (southern), 1880; "Anne," 1882; "East Angels," 1886; "Jupiter Lights," 1889.

MARY HARTWELL CATHERWOOD, b. O., 1847; resident of Illinois. Historical romances of the old North-West. "Craque-o'-Doom," 1881; "The Romance of Dollard," 1889; "Old Kaskaskia," 1893; "The White Islander," 1893; etc.

MARY HALLOCK FOOTE, b. N. Y., 1847. Artist. Resident of Colorado, California, and Idaho. "The Led Horse Claim," 1883; "John Bodewin's Testimony," 1886; "The Chosen Valley," 1892; "In Exile, and Other Stories," 1894; "Cœur d' Alène," 1894; "The Prodigal," 1900.

ALICE FRENCH ("Octave Thanet"), b. Mass., 1850. Resident of Arkansas and Iowa. Trans-Mississippi stories. "Knitters in the Sun," 1887; "Expiation," 1890; "Stories of a Western Town," 1893.

HENRY BLAKE FULLER, b. Chicago, 1857. Novels, chiefly of Chicago life. "The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani," 1890; "The Cliff-Dwellers," 1893; "With the Procession," 1895; "The Last Refuge" (a Sicilian romance), 1900.

HAMLIN GARLAND, b. Wisconsin, 1860. Educated in Iowa; taught in Illinois; farmed in Dakota; lectured in the East. "Main-Travelled Roads" (short stories), 1891; "Rose of Dutcher's Cooley," 1895; "The Eagle's Heart," 1900. Also "Prairie Songs," 1893, and "The Trail of the Gold-Seekers" (prose and verse), 1899.

ROBERT HERRICK, Associate Professor in the University of Chicago; writer of short stories and novels. "The Man Who Wins," 1896; "Literary Love Letters," 1897; "Love's Dilemma," 1898; "The Gospel of Freedom," 1899; "The Web of Life," 1900.

CANADA.

GILBERT PARKER, b. Canada, 1862. Lecturer in English Literature at Toronto; journalist in the South Seas; later resident in England; contributor to American magazines. "Pierre and His People," 1892; "When Valmond Came to Pontiac," 1895; "The Seats of the

Mighty," 1896; "The Pomp of the Lavilettes," 1897; "A Romany of the Snows," 1897; "The Battle of the Strong," 1898; and other romances.

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS

HISTORIANS

See text for PARKMAN and predecessors.

HENRY CHARLES LEA, b. Philadelphia, 1825. Publisher. "Superstition and Force," 1866; "Studies in Church History," 1869; "History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages," 1887-88.

GOLDWIN SMITH, b. England, 1823. Professor of Modern History at Oxford, 1858-66; at Cornell Univ., Ithaca, N. Y., 1868-71; later resident at Toronto. "Irish History and Irish Character," 1861; "Civil War in America," 1866; "Relations Between America and England," 1869; "History of the United States," 1893.

ULYSSES S. GRANT, b. O., 1822; d. 1885. Commander of all the American armies, 1864; President of the U. S., 1869-77. "Personal Memoirs," 1885-86.

JUSTIN WINSOR, 1831-1897. Librarian at Boston and Harvard. Editor of "Memorial History of Boston," 1880-81; "Narrative and Critical History of America" (8 vols.), 1885-89; "Christopher Columbus," 1891.

ANDREW DICKSON WHITE, b. N. Y., 1832. Professor of History; President of Cornell University; U. S. Ambassador to Germany. "Warfare of Science," 1876. "The New Germany," 1882.

HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT, b. O., 1832. Resident of California. Gathered materials for and edited "History of the Pacific States," in 39 volumes, 1882-90.

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS, JR., b. Boston, 1835. Lawyer and politician. "Three Episodes of Massachusetts History," 1892; "Massachusetts: Its Historians and its History," 1893.

HENRY ADAMS, b. Boston, 1838. Professor and editor. "John Randolph," 1882; "History of the United States" (9 vols.), 1889-91.

JAMES SCHOULER, b. Mass., 1839. Historian and legal writer and lecturer. "History of the United States Under the Constitution" (6 vols.), 1880 ff.

ALFRED T. MAHAN, b. West Point, N. Y., 1840. Captain in the

navy since 1885. "Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660-1783," 1890; "Life of Farragut;" "Life of Nelson," etc.

JOHN CLARK RIDPATH, b. Ind., 1841; d. 1900. Professor and editor. "Popular History of the United States," "Cyclopedia of Universal History," "Great Races of Mankind" (1894), Lives of Garfield, Blaine, Gladstone, etc.

HERMANN EDUARD VON HOLST, b. Russia, 1841. Professor in Germany and at the University of Chicago. "Constitutional and Political History of the United States" (8 vols.), 1876-1892.

JOHN FISKE, b. Hartford, Conn., 1842; d. 1901. Lecturer on Philosophy, Assistant Librarian, and member of the Board of Overseers at Harvard. Historian, philosopher, and evolutionist. "Myths and Myth-Makers," 1872; "Darwinism," 1879; "The Destiny of Man," 1884; "The Beginnings of New England," 1889; etc., etc.

JAMES FORD RHODES, b. Cleveland, 1848. "History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850," to be completed to 1885 in eight volumes.

HENRY CABOT LODGE, b. Boston, 1850. Lawyer and senator. "Short History of the English Colonies in America," 1881; "The Story of the American Revolution," "Alexander Hamilton," etc.

JOHN BACH MCMASTER, b. Brooklyn, 1852. Civil engineer; Professor of History at the University of Pennsylvania. "A History of the People of the United States" (in seven volumes; vols. i-v, 1883-1899).

WOODROW WILSON, b. Va., 1856. Lecturer; Professor of Jurisprudence and Politics at Princeton. "Congressional Government," "The State," "Elements of Historical and Practical Politics," etc.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT, b. N. Y., 1858. Adventurer in the west; colonel in the war with Spain; governor of New York; Vice-President of the U. S. "The Naval War of 1812," 1882; "Essays on Practical Politics," 1888; "Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail," 1888; "The Winning of the West," 1889; "Oliver Cromwell," 1900; "The Strenuous Life" (essays and addresses), 1900; etc.

LITERARY HISTORIANS

MOSES COIT TYLER, b. Conn., 1835; d. 1900. Professor of American History at Cornell. "History of American Literature from 1607-

1765," 1878; "The Literary History of the American Revolution," 1897.

THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY, b. N. Y., 1838. Professor of English at Yale. "History of the English Language," 1879; "James Fenimore Cooper," 1882; "Studies in Chaucer," 1891.

CHARLES FRANCIS RICHARDSON, b. Maine, 1851. Professor of English Literature at Dartmouth College. "A Primer of American Literature," 1878; "American Literature 1607-1885," 1890.

BARRETT WENDELL, b. Boston, 1855. Professor of English at Harvard. "Life of Cotton Mather," 1891; "Stelligeri, and Other Essays," 1893; "Literary History of America," 1900.

PHILOSOPHERS, SOCIOLOGISTS, ETC.

ELISHA MULFORD, b. Pa., 1833; d. Mass., 1885. Episcopal clergyman and philosophical writer. "The Nation," 1870; "The Republic of God," 1881.

MONCURE D. CONWAY, b. Va., 1832. Methodist, later Unitarian, clergyman. "The Rejected Stone," 1861; "The Eastward Pilgrimage," 1870; "Christianity," 1876; "Demonology and Devil-Lore," 1878.

WILLIAM TORREY HARRIS, b. Conn., 1835. Lecturer at Concord School of Philosophy; U. S. Commissioner of Education. "Introduction to the Study of Philosophy," 1889; "Hegel's Logic," 1890; "Psychologic Foundations of Education;" etc.

EDWIN LAWRENCE GODKIN, b. Ireland, 1831. Journalist and lawyer. Established *The Nation*; edited *The Nation* and the New York *Evening Post*. "Government" (in the American Science Series); "Problems of Democracy;" "Unforseen Tendencies of Democracy," 1898; etc.

HENRY GEORGE, b. Philadelphia, 1839; settled in California, 1858; d. at New York, 1897. Political economist. "Progress and Poverty," 1879; "The Land Question," 1883; "Social Problems," 1884; etc.

FRANCIS A. WALKER, 1840-1897. Brevetted brigadier-general in Civil War; commissioner of Indian affairs; professor at Yale; president of Mass. Inst. of Technology. "The Indian Question," 1874; "The Wages Question," 1876; "Money, Trade, and Industry," 1879; "Land and Its Rent," 1883; "Political Economy," 1883; etc.

critical volume, "Poets of America." The minor poets are freely represented, about six hundred names being included. Contains also brief biographical notices. (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)

American Prose. Edited by G: R. Carpenter. Selections from twenty-five representative authors from Cotton Mather to Parkman (living authors not included), with critical introductions by various writers. —(Macmillan.)

Cyclopædia of American Literature. E. A. and G. L. Duyckinck. Two large volumes; revised edition, 1875. Extended personal and critical notices, with liberal selections. Criticism somewhat antiquated. Most useful for biographies and selections from the works of early or less important and even quite forgotten writers.

Library of Poetry and Song. William Cullen Bryant. Selections from British and American poets; also translations. Published 1870.

Selections and sometimes entire works of standard authors may be found in inexpensive form in the "Lake English Classics;" "Riverside Literature Series;" and "Cassell's National Library" (paper).

BIOGRAPHY

There are standard and authorized biographies of the following writers:

Alcott, Louisa M. Life, Letters, and Journals, by Mrs. E. D. Cheney.
Bryant. By Parke Godwin, 2 vols.
Channing, Dr. Wm. E. By W. H. Channing.
Dana, R. H., Jr. By C. F. Adams.
Edwards, Jonathan. By A. V. G. Allen, in American Religious Leaders series.
Emerson. Memoir, by J. E. Cabot, 2 vols. Emerson in Concord, by E. W. Emerson.
Franklin. Life, by Jared Sparks, 1844; by James Parton, 1864.
Halleck. Life and Letters, by J. G. Wilson.
Hawthorne. Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife, by Julian Hawthorne, 2 vols.
Holmes. Life and Letters, by J. T. Morse, Jr., 2 vols.
Irving. By Pierre M. Irving, 3 vols.
Longfellow. By Samuel Longfellow, 3 vols.
Lowell. Letters, edited by C. E. Norton, 2 vols.
Mather, Cotton. By Barrett Wendell.

Motley. Correspondence, edited by G. W. Curtis.

Ossoli, Margaret Fuller. Memoirs, by Emerson, Channing, and Clarke.

Parkman. By C. H. Farnham.

Paulding. Literary Life, by W. I. Paulding.

Payne, John Howard. Life and Writings, by Gabriel Harrison.

Prescott. By George Ticknor.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. By C. E. Stowe.

Taylor. Life and Letters, by Marie Hansen Taylor and H. E. Scudder, 2 vols.

Thoreau. By W. E. Channing.

Whitman. By R. M. Burke.

Whittier. Life and Letters, by S. T. Pickard, 2 vols.

Special series of biographies are as follows:

American Men of Letters. Edited by C. D. Warner. Biographies of Bryant, Cooper, Curtis, Emerson, Franklin, Hawthorne (in preparation), Irving, Longfellow (in preparation), Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Poe, Prescott (in preparation), Ripley, Simms, Taylor, Thoreau, Noah Webster, Whittier (in preparation), Willis.

Great Writers Series. Somewhat shorter biographies than the above, mostly by British authors, and containing extensive bibliographies. The series includes Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Thoreau, Whittier. Of Hawthorne there is a biography also in the English Men of Letters Series.

Beacon Biographies. Very brief lives of eminent men, among them the following American authors: Agassiz, Phillips Brooks, Cooper, Emerson, Grant, Hawthorne, Jefferson, Lowell, Thomas Paine, Daniel Webster, and Whittier.

GENERAL REFERENCE

Appleton's Cyclopædia of American Biography, 6 vols. Concise accounts of all Americans of note, living or dead.

Allibone's Dictionary of Authors. A complete list of authors, titles, and dates of publications. The supplement is brought up to 1891.

Adams' (O. F.) Dictionary of American Authors. Very brief sketches of 6,000 American authors. Names, dates, and titles of chief books (without dates). Recent.

Who's Who in America. Edited by J. W. Leonard, 1899-1900. Brief sketches of 8,600 living Americans. Useful especially for the latest writers.

Whitcomb's Chronological Outlines of American Literature. A carefully arranged table of important authors, books, and dates, up to 1894.

Further references will be found in the following study lists and exercises. In these lists the general histories will be referred to by the names of their authors—Wendell, Richardson, Tyler, and Duyckinck (1875 edition). Other abbreviations are:

L. A. L. Stedman and Hutchinson's "Library of American Literature."

A. A. Stedman's "American Anthology."

L. P. S. Bryant's "Library of Poetry and Song."

A. P. Carpenter's "American Prose."

A. M. L. "American Men of Letters Series."

G. W. S. "Great Writers Series."

SUGGESTIONS FOR READING AND STUDY

I. The Colonial Period

For the history of the period consult Lodge's "English Colonies in America" and Fiske's "Beginnings of New England." For a brief survey of the literature, see chapter xxi, of G. P. Fisher's "Colonial Era," in the American History Series. Read Tyler, chapter i.; Richardson, pp. 16-23; Wendell, 26-34. A graceful sketch of the period, with interesting engravings, may be found in D. G. Mitchell's "American Lands and Letters," chapters i. and ii.

Captain John Smith. The best edition of Smith's works is in "Arber's Reprints." Life, by C. D. Warner. Criticism: Jameson's "Historical Writing in America," pp. 4-13; Tyler; Richardson.

Read "The General History of Virginia," Book III., chapter ii. ("Arber," II., 391-403); or the following selections: "L. A. L.," I., 3-6, 10-17; Tyler, chapter ii. Collateral reading: "To Have and to Hold," by Mary Johnston (*Atlantic Monthly*, 1899-1900).

William Bradford, Samuel Sewall, etc. Bradford's "History of Plymouth Plantation" and Sewall's "Diary" are both published in the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society. Criticism: C. F. Adams's "Massachusetts: Its Historians and Its History."

Read the following selections: "L. A. L," I., 93-94, 291, 300-301; II., 189, 192-194, 248-254. Collateral reading: Mrs. Hemans's "Landing of the Pilgrims;" Longfellow's "Courtship of Miles Standish;" Mrs. Stowe's "The Mayflower;" Mrs. J. G. Austin's historical novels, "Standish of Standish," "Betty Alden," etc.; Hawthorne's "Grandfather's Chair," part I., chapters ii.,iii.,vi.,viii.;Whittier's "Prophecy of Samuel Sewall;" Lowell's essay, "New England Two Centuries Ago."

Poetry. Read "L. A. L.," I., 314-315, II., 495; Wendell, 38-41; "Lovewell's Fight," Duyckinck, I., 444.

Theology, etc. Read "L. A. L.," I., 192-195, 251-253, 276-278.

Cotton Mather. Life, by Barrett Wendell, in "Makers of America Series." Criticism: Barrett Wendell's "Stelligeri," 114-118; Jameson's "Historical Writing in America," 46-60.

Read selections in "L. A. L.," II., 140-142; or in "A. P." Collateral reading: Hawthorne's "Grandfather's Chair," II., iv., v.; Whittier's "The Garrison of Cape Ann;" Longfellow's "The Phantom Ship" (cp. Mather's account, "A P.," p. 6).

Jonathan Edwards. Life, by A. V. G. Allen, in "American Religious Leaders Series."

Read "L. A. L.," II., 373-375; or "A. P.," 16-18. Collateral reading: Holmes's "Pages from an Old Volume of Life," chap. xi.

John Woolman. Woolman's "Journal," edited by Whittier. Read Whittier's Introduction, pp. 1-4, and chapter i. See Lamb's "A Quaker's Meeting," in "Essays of Elia."

Find, in any of these early writers, an eloquent passage, a bit of imaginative description, a flash of wit, or a line of real poetry. Who were the great English poets between 1650 and 1750? English essay writers? What famous religious allegory was written in England in this period? What famous book for boys?

II. Transition: Benjamin Franklin

The fullest biography of Franklin is that by James Parton, in two volumes; others are by McMaster, in "A. M. L.," by Morse, in "American Statesmen Series," and by P. L. Ford—"The Many-Sided Franklin," first printed serially in *The Century*," 1898-99. The best edition of the "Autobiography" is that edited by Bigelow, in 3 vols., 1868 (with additional matter, 1874). Inexpensive reprints of earlier editions may be found in the "Lake English Classics" (in preparation), Cassell's "National Library," etc. "Poor Richard's Almanac" is printed in the "Thumb-Nail Series."

Read Parton's "Life," II., viii., 647-655. Read "L. A. L.," III., 15, 17-21, 26-29; or "A. P.," 36-47. The whole of the "Autobiography" should, if possible, be read. Study chapter two (or chapters one and two) for revelations of Franklin's ready helpfulness, his practical turn of mind, his willingness to experiment, his inclination to moralize, and other traits of character. Was he brave? Was he modest? Was he honest? Was he too frugal to be generous, or too generous to be frugal? What did he read? Examine the chapter

also for examples of homely Saxon language, and for words used in an old or strange sense. Gather a number of Poor Richard's maxims and commit a few to memory. See the poem by Franklin in "L. P. S."

III. The Revolutionary Period

Read Tyler's "Literary History of the American Revolution," Vol. I., pp. 1-12; Richardson, pp. 36-53; Wendell, II., vii. and viii. For special authors, see Tyler's "Three Men of Letters" (Berkeley, Trumbull, and Barlow); Mitchell's "American Lands and Letters." History: John Fiske's "American Revolution," 2 vols.; A. B. Hart's "Formation of the Union" (Epochs of American History); Lives of Hamilton, Jefferson, etc. Selections: "L. A. L.;" "A. P." (from Washington, Paine, and Jefferson); Duyckinck; D. J. Brewer's "World's Best Orations," 10 vols.; F. Moore's "American Eloquence," 2 vols.; F. Moore's "Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution" (1856); Eggleston's "American War Ballads and Lyrics." Collateral reading: Pierpont's "Warren's Address;" Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride;" Emerson's "Concord Hymn;" Cooper's "Spy;" Dr. S. W. Mitchell's "Hugh Wynne;" Winston Churchill's "Richard Carvel."

Prose. Compare the language of the Declaration of Independence or of the Federalist papers with that of Paine's "The Crisis" ("A. P.," 70) or of Franklin's "Autobiography." Read Washington's "Farewell Address," paragraphs 1-14, ("L. A. L.," III., 162; "World's Best Orations," X., 3740); Jefferson's "Letters," "L. A. L.," III., 274, etc. Also Crèvecœur's "Letters from an American Farmer," Duyckinck, I., 185; "L. A. L.," III., 138.

Poetry, Philip Freneau. Read "The Yankee's Return from Camp" and "The Ballad of Nathan Hale," Duyckinck, I., 480, "L. A. L.," III., 338, 347; Hopkinson's "Battle of the Kegs," Duyckinck, I., 228, "L. A. L.," III., 241; Freneau's "Eutaw Springs," "The Wild Honeysuckle," and "To a Honey Bee," Duyckinck, I., 355, 360, "L. A. L.," III., 448, 453, 456.

IV. The New Environment

Charles Brockden Brown. Read Warner's "Irving," chapter i., "A. M. L.;" also the article on Brown in the "Encyc. Britannica." There is a life of Brown by Prescott in Sparks's "American Biog-

raphy;" also a memoir prefixed to "Wieland" (Brown's "Works," 6 vols., Philadelphia), and an essay on Brown in Prescott's "Miscellanies."

Read the selections in "A. P.," 89-100 (or "L. A. L.," Vol. IV.), and note that the author, in spite of his involved way of thinking and his inflated language, has yet a directness and even swiftness of manner that compels attention and at times fascinates.

Irving. There are many editions of Irving's works. One of the best is the Geoffrey Crayon edition in 27 volumes, containing the biography by Pierre M. Irving in 3 volumes (Putnam). The "Knickerbocker History" may be had in Cassell's National Library, 2 vols. See also the "Lake English Classics;" Life, by C. D. Warner, in "A. M. L." Criticism: Eulogy, by W. C. Bryant, in Bryant's "Prose Works;" "A Fable for Critics," by Lowell.

Read "Knickerbocker History," Book III., chapter i.; "Sketch-Book"—"The Author's Account of Himself," "Rip Van Winkle," "The Christmas Dinner," "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow;" "Alhambra"—"The Court of Lions." Illustrate, from Irving and Franklin, the difference between humor and wit. What qualities are seen in Irving that were lacking in the Puritans? How wide-embracing in his love of beauty? What directions does his interest in English literature take? Does his style seem antiquated? How does the ordinary modern novel differ from one of Irving's sketches?

Collateral reading: Longfellow's poem, "In the Churchyard at Tarrytown."

Cooper. Household edition of Cooper's works, with introductions by Susan F. Cooper, 32 vols. (Houghton, Mifflin and Co.) "The Last of the Mohicans" ("Lake English Classics," Scott, Foresman and Co.) Life, by T. R. Lounsbury, in "A. M. L." "A Glance Backward," by Susan F. Cooper, *Atlantic Monthly*, Feb., 1887. "Chronicle and Comment," *The Bookman*, Oct., 1899.

Read "The Pioneers," chapters iii. and xxviii.; "The Deerslayer," chapter xvi.; "The Pilot," chapters i. to iv.; or better, "The Last of the Mohicans" entire. Compare Cooper with Scott and determine from your own point of view whether American or European themes yield the greater interest. Estimate the relative proportions of description, narration, and dialogue, in each writer. Find examples of Cooper's moralizing. Does Cooper mean to present Natty Bumppo

as an ideal character? Test for yourself the charge that Cooper's style is hasty and faulty.

Allston, Drake, Halleck, Willis, etc. "Life and Letters of Halleck," by James G. Wilson. Life of Willis, by Beers, in "A. M. L."

Most of the poems named in the text may be found in Duyckinck, "L. A. L.," "A. A.," or "L. P. S." Read Drake's "Culprit Fay." Do you find anything in it derived from the poet's observation—anything that could not have been learned from other poetry? How does it compare in metre, music, and imagery with Lowell's "Vision of Sir Launfal?" Do you find in any of Willis's poetry a genuine love of nature?

Collateral reading: Lowell's "Cambridge Thirty Years Ago" (Prose Works, Riverside ed., Vol. I., 72-76, on Allston); Lowell's "Fable for Critics" and Poe's "Literati" (on Halleck and Willis); Whittier's poem, "Fitz-Greene Halleck."

Bryant. Bryant's works are published by D. Appleton and Co., of New York (poems, 2 vols., prose, 2 vols.; Household edition of poems, 1 vol.). Life, by Parke Godwin, 2 vols.; by Bigelow, in "A. M. L." "Bryant and his Friends," by James G. Wilson. Criticism: Stedman's "Poets of America;" J. Alden's "Studies in Bryant," in Literature Primer Series; Whipple's "Literature and Life;" Lowell's "Fable for Critics."

Select three poems in blank verse, and three in rhyme, for study. Contrast "Thanatopsis" with the opening pages of Keats's "Endymion," written about the same time. Which seems the more youthful? Which has the more color and melody? Which, if either, is the more devout? What examples do you find in the former of conventional poetic diction? Does Bryant's poetry in general show clearly the inspiration of a new land? Is it equally clear that the new land is America and no other? Could "Thanatopsis" have been written in Australia? In England? In London? Trace any similarities between Bryant and Cooper. Read "My Tribute to Four Poets" in Walt Whitman's "Specimen Days."

V. Romance

Poe. Stedman and Woodberry's critical edition of Poe's works, 10 vols. Selections from "Poe's Tales" in the "Lake English Classics" (in preparation); Life, by G. E. Woodberry, in "A. M. L."

Criticism: Stedman's "Poets of America;" "Poe's Place in American Literature," by H. W. Mabie, in *Atlantic Monthly*, Dec., 1899.

Read "The Fall of the House of Usher," "Ligeia," "The Masque of the Red Death," "The Gold-Bug," and "A Descent into the Maelström;" also the important poems as indicated in the text. Can a moral purpose be detected in any of these tales? What is their source of interest? Is conversation much used, or naturally used? Is any character or any act viewed in the light of right or wrong? Compare Poe with Cooper in this respect. Select a passage particularly beautiful for the scene described or for the language used. Compare the metre of "The Raven" with that of Mrs. Browning's "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" (1844) and Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" (1842)—(read Poe's essay, "The Philosophy of Composition"). What other American poet employed refrains effectively? In what other familiar poem is a trochaic measure used? Find among Poe's poetry a light-hearted poem; a poem without the first personal pronoun. Find a line that can be aptly quoted apart from its context.

Collateral reading: "Poe's Cottage at Fordham," by J. H. Boner, and Sonnets by Sarah Helen Whitman, in "A. A."

From South to North. "Life of Simms," by W. P. Trent, in "A. M. L." (see also "Southern Literature," by Louise Manly). "Life of R. H. Dana, Jr.," by C. F. Adams.

Read "Two Years Before the Mast" (or at least chapters iv., v., xiii., xiv.). Selections also from Simms, Melville, and Judd may be read; they can be found in Duyckinck or "L. A. L."

Hawthorne. Works, Riverside edition, 13 vols. Separate volumes and selections in convenient form in the "Lake English Classics," "Riverside Literature Series," etc. Life, by James, in "A. M. L.;" by Conway, in "G. W. S.;" by Annie Fields, in "Beacon Biographies." "Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife," by Julian Hawthorne. "Memories of Hawthorne," by Rose Hawthorne Lathrop. Criticism: "Yesterdays with Authors," J. T. Fields; "Essays Theological and Literary," R. H. Hutton; "A Study of Hawthorne," G. P. Lathrop; "The New England Poets," W. C. Lawton.

Read "The Snow Image" (and the preface to that volume). Read "Ethan Brand," and trace some of the sources of the tale in the "American Note-Books" for 1838, July 26 to September 7. Read

"The Old Manse." From what does "The Celestial Railroad" derive its form? What in the religious tendency of the times inspired Hawthorne to write it? Is it seriously meant? Find other allegories in Hawthorne. What are the best characters in "The House of the Seven Gables"? What is the climax of that story? Read "The Custom House" (introduction to "The Scarlet Letter"). Was Hawthorne's experience of life either broader or deeper than Poe's? Did he turn it to better account in his work?

Collateral reading: Longfellow's poem, "Hawthorne;" Alcott's sonnet, "Hawthorne," in "A. A."

Harriet Beecher Stowe. Life, by Mrs. James T. Fields.

Read "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in part or entire. In what ways did the institution of slave-holding hinder or help literature?

VI. The Transcendental Movement

Religion and Philosophy in New England. Read Wendell, Book V., Chapters iv. and v. References: "Our Liberal Movement in Theology," by J. H. Allen. "Life of Dr. Channing," by W. H. Channing. "Transcendentalism in New England," by O. B. Frothingham. Essays on "Transcendentalism" by E. Dowden ("Studies in Literature") and R. W. Emerson ("Nature, Addresses, and Lectures"). Frothingham's "Life of Ripley," in "A. M. L." "Brook Farm," by Lindsay Swift (National Studies in American Letters). "Brook Farm," by J. T. Codman. "Life of Margaret Fuller," by T. W. Higginson, in "A. M. L." "Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli," by Emerson and others.

On Margaret Fuller ("Miranda") and Alcott, see Lowell's "Fable for Critics." Read the first part of Lowell's essay on "Thoreau." Poems of Channing, Very, and Cranch may be found in "L. A. L.," "A. A.," and "L. P. S." Very's complete "Poems" have been edited by J. F. Clarke. Collateral reading: Hawthorne's "Blithedale Romance;" Emerson's Address on "Theodore Parker;" Whittier's poem on "Channing;" Lowell's "Elegy on the Death of Dr. Channing;" Alcott's sonnets on "Channing" and "Margaret Fuller" (in "A. A.").

Emerson. Works, Riverside edition, 12 vols. "A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson," by J. E. Cabot. "Emerson in Concord," by E. W. Emerson. "Ralph Waldo Emerson: His Life, Writings,

and Philosophy," by G. W. Cooke. Biography of Emerson, by O. W. Holmes, in "A. M. L.;" by Richard Garnett, in "G. W. S." Essays by Matthew Arnold ("Discourses in America"), J. J. Chapman ("Emerson, and Other Essays"), E. C. Stedman ("Poets of America").

The best essays of Emerson to begin with are "The American Scholar," "Self-Reliance," "Compensation," and some of the simpler essays like "Manners" and "Gifts." For the poetry, begin with the poems of nature—"May-Day," "Woodnotes," "The Titmouse," etc. Are the truths in "The American Scholar" applicable to all scholars? Why are they addressed to American scholars? Do Americans particularly need encouragement to self-reliance? Distinguish between self-reliance and self-assurance. Is the doctrine of compensation likely to make men inactive and indifferent to success or progress? What do you understand by the Over-Soul? Do you judge Emerson's reading to have been wide? What writers does he refer to most frequently? Compare his list of Representative Men with Carlyle's Heroes ("Heroes and Hero Worship"). Compare one of his paragraphs with one of Bacon's, and note similarities and differences of style. Commit to memory several of his aphorisms. Compare his "Threnody" with Pierpont's "My Child" ("A. A."). What truths do you find in "Each and All"? What is the central truth? What qualities appear in Emerson's poetry that were not in Bryant's?

Collateral reading: "Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson;" Lowell's essay, "Emerson the Lecturer;" "Homes and Haunts of Emerson," by Sanborn, in *Scribner's*, Feb., 1879; "Birds and Poets," by John Burroughs; "The Great Stone Face," by Hawthorne ("Twice Told Tales"); "A Visit to R. W. Emerson," and "By Emerson's Grave," in Walt Whitman's "Specimen Days."

Thoreau. Works, Riverside edition, 11 vols. Life, by F. B. Sanborn, in "A. M. L." "Familiar Letters of Thoreau," edited by F. B. Sanborn. "Thoreau, the Poet-Naturalist," by William Ellery Channing. "Thoreau, His Life and Aims," by H. A. Page. Essays on Thoreau by Emerson ("Lectures and Biographical Sketches"), Lowell ("Among My Books"), T. W. Higginson ("Short Studies of American Authors"), John Burroughs ("Indoor Studies"), R. L. Stevenson ("Familiar Studies of Men and Books").

Read *Walden*, chapters on "Economy" and "Sounds." A variety

of selections may be found in "A. P." What traits of the Puritan do you find in Thoreau? Discuss Stevenson's statement that "Thoreau was a skulker." Discuss Burroughs's declaration that Thoreau's humor "had worked a little—was not quite sweet." What of his resourcefulness? His acuteness and accuracy as an observer? His acuteness and soundness as a reasoner? Why is he more widely read to-day than he was fifty years ago?

Collateral reading: Miss Alcott's poem, "Thoreau's Flute," and Channing's "Tears in Spring," in "A. A." (The description of the "forest seer" in Emerson's "Woodnotes" fits Thoreau admirably, but it was written before Emerson knew Thoreau and therefore could not have been intended, as commonly supposed, to describe him.)

VII. National Life and Culture

Oratory. "Life of Webster," by G. T. Curtis. Lives of Webster, Clay, Lincoln, etc., in the "American Statesmen Series." Specimen orations in F. Moore's "American Eloquence," 2 vols.; D. J. Brewer's "The World's Best Orations," 10 vols. Criticism: Whipple's "Character and Characteristic Men;" Emerson's "Life and Letters in New England;" Wendell's "Literary History of America."

Read the first three extracts from Webster's speeches and the three addresses of Lincoln in "A. P.," comparing them carefully in matter and style.

Collateral reading: Higginson's "Cheerful Yesterdays;" Choate's "Eulogy on Webster;" Hawthorne's "Great Stone Face" ("Old Stony Phiz"); Whittier's "Ichabod," "The Lost Occasion," and "Sumner;" Longfellow's "Charles Sumner," and "Three Friends of Mine" (Felton, Agassiz, and Sumner); Lowell's sonnet on "Wendell Phillips;" Alcott's sonnet on the same (in "A. A.").

History and Criticism. "Life of Prescott," by Geo. Ticknor. "Memoir of Motley," by O. W. Holmes. "Motley's Correspondence," edited by G. W. Curtis. "Life of Parkman," by C. H. Farnham. The last named is of especial value. Criticism: Whipple's "Essays and Reviews" and "Recollections of Eminent Men;" Jameson's "History of Historical Writing in America."

Read Parkman's "California and Oregon Trail," chapters xiv.–xvii.; or the selections from Prescott, Motley, and Parkman in "A. P." Collateral reading: Mrs. Catherwood's romances.

Longfellow. Works, Riverside edition, 11 vols. Cambridge edition of poems, with notes, 1 vol. Life, by Samuel Longfellow, 3 vols.; by Robertson, in "G. W. S." Criticism: "Longfellow," by G. W. Curtis, *Harper's Magazine*, June, 1882; "The Art of Longfellow," by H. E. Scudder, "Men and Letters;" Stedman's "Poets of America."

Special reading in Longfellow scarcely needs to be indicated; selected poems may be found in the "Riverside Literature Series" and elsewhere. Poems contributing to his own biography are: "Footsteps of Angels," "The Old Clock on the Stairs," "To the River Charles," "The Two Angels," "My Lost Youth," "The Children's Hour," "Three Friends of Mine," "Morituri Salutamus." Arrange Longfellow's important poems under three heads: dramatic, narrative, and lyric. How wide is the scope of the lyric poems? Could any be readily set to music? Find a poem of nature with no moral in it; a poem of human life with no touch of outdoor nature in it; a sad poem; a poem for scholars; an allegory. What is dactylic hexameter verse? What is a sonnet? Does Longfellow reflect clearly his New England environment? How does his Americanism compare with Irving's? With Bryant's? With Emerson's? In what respects is he superior, and in what inferior, to Bryant and to Poe?

In connection with "Evangeline," read Hawthorne's "Grandfather's Chair," II., viii. Read the "Death of Longfellow," in Walt Whitman's "Specimen Days."

Whittier. Works, Riverside edition, 7 vols. Cambridge edition of poems, with notes, 1 vol. Life and Letters, by S. T. Pickard, 2 vols. Biography, by F. H. Underwood. Criticism: George Woodberry, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1892; "Stelligeri," by Barrett Wendell; Stedman's "Poets of America;" Lowell's "Fable for Critics."

Select for study one of Whittier's best narrative poems or ballads, one poem on freedom, one on nature, and one religious. Contrast, as idyls, "Snow-Bound" and "Evangeline" (noting construction, spontaneity, truth of delineation, etc.). Compare "The Tent on the Beach" with Longfellow's "Tales of a Wayside Inn." What New England poet does Whittier most resemble in simplicity of thought? What one in simplicity of form? On what ground, if any, could he be called the national poet of America? What serious objections are there to this use of the title? In what vital point does the resemblance between Whittier and Burns fail?

Collateral reading: Poems by Holmes and Elizabeth Stuart

Phelps in the *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1892; Longfellow's "The Three Silences of Molinos;" Holmes's two poems "On Whittier's Birthday;" the dedication of Bayard Taylor's "Lars."

Lowell. Works, Riverside edition, 12 vols. Cambridge edition of poems, 1 vol. Selections in "Lake English Classics," Riverside Literature Series, "A. P.," etc. Biographical sketch, by F. H. Underwood (a full biography is in preparation by H. E. Scudder). "Letters," edited by C. E. Norton, 2 vols. Criticism: Stedman's "Poets of America;" William Watson's "Excursions in Criticism" ("Lowell as a Critic"); Whipple's "Outlooks on Society."

Read the following poems: "Sir Launfal," "She Came and Went," "To the Dandelion," "Under the Willows," "The Present Crisis," parts of the "Biglow Papers," and "Commemoration Ode." Of the prose, read: "My Garden Acquaintance" and "On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners" (the critical prose and "Democracy" are better postponed). Compare "The Courtin'" with Fessenden's "Country Courtship" in Duyckinck. Compare "After the Burial" with Emerson's "Threnody." Point out unevenness of execution in "The Commemoration Ode." What is an ode? Compare with the odes of the English Cowley. Read a page of Lowell's prose three or four times and see if you cannot discover something new—a reference, an idea, a twist of thought or phrase,—each time. Can Lowell be called a lover of the mediaeval, like Irving and Longfellow? Do his European culture and his American common sense mix well? (Compare Emerson.) Trace the compliments to Lowell in Holmes's poem, "To James Russell Lowell." Discuss the justice of the estimate in Whittier's lines, "James Russell Lowell."

Collateral reading: "James Russell Lowell and His Friends," by E. E. Hale; "A Personal Retrospect," by W. D. Howells, *Scribner's Magazine*, September, 1900; Longfellow's "The Herons of Elmwood."

Holmes. Works, Riverside edition, 13 vols. Cambridge edition of poems, 1 vol. Selections in Modern Classics, Riverside Literature Series, etc. Life and Letters, by John T. Morse, Jr., 2 vols. Criticism: Stedman's "Poets of America;" Curtis's "Literary and Social Essays;" Haweis's "American Humorists;" Lawton's "Poets of New England."

Read "The Last Leaf," "Dorothy Q.," "The Deacon's Masterpiece," and "The Chambered Nautilus." Read the introduction to the collected poems, "To my Readers." Does Holmes's sentiment

often take on a melancholy cast? Does it ever degenerate into sentimentalism? Is he a conservative, or a radical, in thought? In form, which is he? Read the following autobiographical passages: "The Poet at the Breakfast Table," pp. 10–32 (Riverside ed.); "A Mortal Antipathy," pp. 1–32; "Pages from an Old Volume of Life," pp. 239–259; Introductions to "The Autocrat" and "Over the Tea-Cups. "Is "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table" well named? Does it contain any real conversation? In which does the humor most approach wit, Lamb or Holmes? Whose humor is of the higher order, Lowell's or Holmes's? Which personality is the more pleasing?

Collateral reading: "Old Cambridge," by T. W. Higginson; "James Russell Lowell and His Friends," by E. E. Hale. Specimens of English "society verse" may be found in Locker-Lampson's "Lyra Elegantiarum."

Minor Poetry and Miscellaneous Prose. Hale's works, Library edition, 10 vols. Higginson's works, Riverside edition, 7 vols. Taylor's Poems, 1 vol., Dramatic Works, 1 vol. (Houghton, Mifflin and Co.); Novels and Travels, 16 vols. (Putnam). "Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor," by Marie Hansen-Taylor and H. E. Scudder, 2 vols "Life of Taylor," by Smyth, in "A. M. L." Criticism: Stedman's "Poets of America." "Life of Curtis," by Cary, in "A. M. L." Curtis's "Orations and Addresses," ed. by C. E. Norton.

Read Read's "Drifting;" Boker's "Dirge for a Soldier;" Taylor's "Bedouin Song;" Holland's "Babyhood" (all in "L. P. S." and "A. A."). Compare "The Voyage" (chapter i.) in Taylor's "Views Afoot" with "The Voyage" in Irving's "Sketch-Book." Read the selections in "A. P." from Curtis's "Duty of the American Scholar." Collateral reading: Longfellow's poem, "Bayard Taylor;" Sidney Lanier's poem, "To Bayard Taylor."

Walt Whitman. "Leaves of Grass" (poems complete), 1 vol. "Prose Works," 1 vol. "Selections from the Poems of Walt Whitman," by Arthur Stedman. (All published by David McKay, Philadelphia.) Biography and Criticism: "Life," by William Clarke (London); by R. M. Burke. "Whitman: A Study," by John Burroughs. "Walt Whitman the Man," by Thomas Donaldson. Essays by J. A. Symonds, in "Essays Speculative and Suggestive," and Edward Dowden, in "Studies in Literature."

In "Specimen Days," read "Paumanok," "Printing Office," "Broadway Sights," "Opening of the Secession War," "Battle of

Bull Run"(compare Irving Bacheller's "Eben Holden," chap. xxxix.), "The Oaks and I," "Nature and Democracy." What other American writers never married and never went abroad? Has the latter fact affected their "Americanism"? Read "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," "Beat! Beat! Drums!" "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," "O Captain, My Captain," "Whispers of Heavenly Death," "The Mystic Trumpeter," "Joy, Shipmate, Joy." Compare "The First Dandelion" with Lowell's "To the Dandelion." Which poem says most or suggests most? Which is the more natural, simple, spontaneous? For imagination and lyric rapture, compare "To the Man-of-War-Bird" with Bryant's "To a Waterfowl" and Shelley's "Skylark." Compare "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" with Clough's "In a Lecture Room." Find, in Whitman's poems, metrical lines, especially dactylic hexameters. Is his "Spirit That Formed This Scene" a satisfactory answer to the charge that his poems lack art? Can Whitman be said to be preaching the same fundamental doctrine as Emerson?

VIII. Poetry in the South

Read Richardson, Vol. I., 58-60; Wendell, VI. iii.

Hayne's Complete Poems, with life, 1882. Timrod's Poems, Memorial edition, 1899. Lanier's Poems, with memorial by William Hayes Ward, 1892. "Select Poems of Sidney Lanier," by Morgan Callaway. "Selections from the Southern Poets," by W. L. Weber, Macmillan's Pocket English Classics. "Bugle Echoes," ed. by F. F. Browne, 1886. "Southern Literature," by Louise Manly. "Pioneers of Southern Literature" (Ticknor, Timrod, Hayne), by S. A. Link. Stedman's "Poets of America."

Read the poems indicated in the text, or the selections to be found in "L. P. S." or "A. A." In particular, Lanier's "Hymns of the Marshes," "Corn," and "The Symphony" should be read. See also "June Dreams in January." Compare Lanier's "Song of the Chattahoochee" with Tennyson's "The Brook." Study the landscape and music effects in "The Marshes of Glynn." What is the faith formulated in "Acknowledgment"?

IX. Prose and Poetry in the West

For selections, see "L. A. L." and "A. A." Biographical and critical helps to the study of living writers are necessarily scant. A

variety of articles, though little that is final, may be found in the files of magazines through Poole's Index. A few of the letters of E. R. Sill have been published in the volume of his prose. See "The Literary Emancipation of the West," *The Forum*, XVI., 156; also "Mississippi Valley Literature," in Walt Whitman's "Specimen Days;" "The Hoosiers," by M. Nicholson, in "National Studies in American Letters."

Suggestions for discussion: The humor of Bret Harte; the seriousness of Mark Twain; Huckleberry Finn's ideas of honor. How far does romantic idealism, as found in "Ramona," enter into Harte's stories? Does it enter into Mark Twain's at all? Discuss Eugene Field as a poet of childhood and as a poet for children.

X. Poetry and Criticism in the East

For selections, see "L. A. L." and "A. A." The Letters of Emily Dickinson have been published, and they are quite as original and suggestive as her poems. Mr. Stedman's critical work should be already familiar. The introduction to his "American Anthology" may be profitably read in this connection.

Suggestions for discussion: The American boy in literature (see Aldrich, Twain, Warner, Howells); the best books for children (Miss Alcott, Mrs. Burnett, Jacob Abbott, etc.). Consider late writers upon outdoor subjects and the varying degree of human interest in their writings. Has New York overtaken New England in literary productivity? (Consider writers, magazines, publishing houses, universities, libraries, etc.) May differences in the quality of product still be observed? Has journalism worked to the detriment of scholarship?

XI. Late Movements in Fiction

For selections from the elder writers, see "L. A. L." Consult W. D. Howell's "Criticism and Fiction," Marion Crawford's "The Novel: What It Is," and Hamlin Garland's "Crumbling Idols;" also "Two Principles in Recent American Fiction," by James Lane Allen, *Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1897.

The short stories of Bret Harte may be contrasted with Poe's tales, or the stories of Miss Wilkins with Hawthorne's tales, to bring out the difference between the romantic and the realistic methods. An attempt might profitably be made to classify the most popular novels

of the last few years according as they are realistic or romantic in their tendency; according as they are delineations of past life (historical), of present life (realistic again, or "local"), or of purely imaginary scenes; and according as they are novels of plot and incident (in the short story, situation), novels of character, or novels of purpose (moral, didactic, "problem" novels). This will at least serve to bring out the nature and extent of the present activities in the field of fiction. Further discussion might turn upon the best short stories, the long novels most likely to live, and the characters in American fiction that are sufficiently well known to permit of reference to them without explanation.

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